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THE CHRISTIANITY OF TO-MORROW

THE CHRISTIANITY OF TO-MORROW

BY

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HARPER AND BROTHERS
Publishers
NEW YORK & LONDON

13599

The Evangelical
School of Theology

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First published 1929

Printed in Great Britain

TO

HEATHER, JOHN AND PHILIP,

WHO WILL HELP TO MAKE THE TO-MORROW

OF WHICH THEIR GRANDFATHER

CAN ONLY DREAM DREAMS

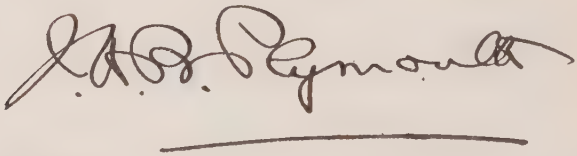
UNITED THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

MAR 15 1960

PREFACE

WHEN my friend Sir James Marchant suggested to me that I should write a book on The Christianity of To-morrow, I felt obliged to accept the suggestion, though I knew that I had neither the leisure nor the ability to do justice to so large a subject. I have not attempted to write a book for theological students or ecclesiastical persons. Their needs are amply catered for, and they will probably regard this book with considerable disfavour, as a superficial treatment of great topics. But the circumstances of my life have brought me into contact with a considerable number of the men and women who are on the outer circle of organised Christianity, and who would gladly believe, if they could, that the Christian religion is not a spent force. It is this class of reader that I have tried to keep in mind in all that I have written. The perplexities of our age are very real, and if I could dare to hope that anything that I have written will help to lift the burden of them from any human life, I should be deeply thankful. A recent writer quotes the saying, "No one will ever know what any Bishop really

believes." The only claim that I make for this book is that I do really believe all that I have written.



THE RECTORY,
DEVONPORT.
August 1929.

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THE CHRISTIANITY OF TO-MORROW

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

THE first task of any author is to justify, if he can, the undertaking in which he is inviting his readers to share. And a writer who ventures, however cautiously, to forecast the future has special need to ask for "most favourable construction" of his adventure. Why, then, do we propose to consider the Christianity of to-morrow? I might answer that in all departments of human thought we are turning from the past to the future. Scientific research to-day is less occupied in the study of the origin of things than in applying its knowledge to the making of the future, history is relating the past to the political and social life of to-morrow, and education is building the future on the sacrifices of the present. The urgency of the problems with which the world is confronted is throwing human thought forward, and thoughtful men everywhere are asking whether catastrophe or new achievement lies before the human race.

"There is no doubt that mankind is once more on the move. The very foundations have been

shaken and loosened, and things are again fluid. The tents have been struck, and the great caravan of humanity is once more on the march." Will the long column be lost in the desert or is there a Promised Land at the end of the journey, and manna to sustain humanity on its pilgrimage ?

What part is Christianity destined to play in this new phase of human history ? Not a few contemporary thinkers are prepared to affirm that its day is done. It has served humanity well in the past, but its foundations have been undermined, and though it may stand for a generation or two the indestructible religious impulse of mankind will clothe itself in other forms. Some Christian thinkers are already asking how much of traditional Christianity can survive the impact of modern thought, and how much must be thrown overboard to lighten the ship so that it may ride out the storm without sinking.

Christianity is only true to itself when it keeps the future steadily in view. As a religion of hope it is pledged to an optimistic conception of human history—not the facile optimism of the early Victorian period, with its belief in progress as a natural law, but the sterner and more virile optimism that knows that blood and tears are still the price of human redemption and that " who chooseth Me must give and hazard all he hath."

The essential truth that underlay the apocalyptic element in the teaching of Jesus Christ was that

His followers were to catch the spirit of expectation. They were not to live on the memories of the past "when there was deep sea and the mighty things"; they were to watch for a coming that still lay in the future, to look forward to greater works still to be done, fuller knowledge still to be revealed. They were to learn to discern the signs of the times that the day of visitation might not come upon them unawares.

The Christian Church has not always lived in this spirit of expectation. Too often the "torpor of assurance" has led to its absorption in the present, till a sudden awakening to new tendencies and dangers has aroused panic and resentment instead of courage and hope.

An objector may urge that any attempt to forecast the future is presumptuous. "The wind bloweth where it listeth." The history of human thought is not an orderly process by which the future grows out of the past. It is true that human foresight has always to take account of unpredictable influences. Something may happen within the next few years that may change the whole intellectual outlook of humanity. Yet in the deepest, as in the most trivial things of life, we are bound to act on the assumption of the continuity of human experience. Unless this assumption were justified, life would be nothing but a vast gamble, and rational action would be impossible.

Another objector may urge that the Christianity

of to-morrow can be nothing other than "the Faith once for all delivered to the saints." This is true—and yet profoundly untrue. The inward and spiritual reality of Christianity remains permanently true—and what that inward and spiritual reality is will be the subject of our inquiry—but the outward and visible forms in which that unchanging reality clothes itself have constantly changed. From the beginning this was so. The Christianity of St. Paul is not identical in its forms of expression with that of the author of the Fourth Gospel; Irenæus speaks a different theological language from that of Clement of Alexandria or Tertullian. Indeed it is this combination of unchanging truth with changing forms of expression that gives Christianity its unique place among the religions of the world. It consecrates the gifts of thought and expression that each generation brings to the service of Him who is the Truth, that every generation may hear in its own language the wonderful works of God. A religion that claims to be the final and absolute religion for the whole human race through all time must welcome all fresh knowledge as an extension of its kingdom, and fill with inward and spiritual grace the outward and visible product of all human thought and experience. Yet Christian thought seems bewildered to-day in face of the new knowledge that has come to us. Never was humanity more urgent in its cry for guidance, more eager

for the consecration of its aspirations and hopes. And when it turns to the Christian Church it finds confusion and uncertainty, timidity and the clash of contending opinions. Is it strange that men are turning to Christian Science, Higher Thought, and even to the teachings of Gautama or Mohammed, in their search for a religion that will satisfy their needs ?

We must not draw too dark a picture. Christianity is still a living force of tremendous power. It may yet go forth conquering and to conquer if it knows the secret of its strength. But that secret does not lie in the gradual watering-down of its distinctive message. If the Christian Church seems weak to-day the reason is that it has allowed its ethical standard to be lowered in its effort to extend its frontiers. In the leavening of human society it has been conspicuously successful, but it sometimes seems as though the gain of the world has been the loss of the Church, as when a mother exhausts her strength in giving birth to her child.

Yet there is no need for despair, or even for despondency. Already the Church is learning to forget the things that are behind that it may reach forth to the things that are before. The Prayer Book controversy in England has shown how large a body of Church opinion is conscious that the old watchwords of party controversy no longer correspond to the real issues with which Christianity

is confronted. We are learning a new tolerance for diversities within the Christian society. For Science has taught us that uniformity in the organic world would mean stagnation, that variation is the necessary condition for all progress; and the same law holds good in the world of thought. The development of Christian theology was due not, as is often supposed, to the intrusion of alien elements from the non-Christian world, but to the efforts of Christian teachers to express in their own way the meaning of Christian experience. What was inadequate or erroneous was weighed in the balance and found wanting; what was judged true was gathered into the garners of the Church. Even the heresies that the Church condemned often proved a way to fuller understanding of the truth. Gnosticism evoked Irenæus, Arianism gave us the Nicene Creed, Pelagianism brought into clearer prominence the Augustinian Doctrine of Grace. Without the constant challenge of new knowledge Christian thought would become stagnant;

> So duly, daily, needs provision be
> For keeping the soul's prowess possible,
> Building new barriers as the old decay,
> Saving us from evasion of life's proof,
> Putting the question ever, "Does God love?
> And will ye hold that truth against the world"?[1]

Controversy has its value in Christian thought, but controversy becomes detestable when it takes

[1] Browning: *A Death in the Desert.*

the form of insistence on the exclusive truth of our own standpoint—the denial of the validity of Christian experience that finds expression in forms other than those by which our religious life has learned to express itself. We are gradually learning that Christianity is too large to be fully expressed in any one sect or party :

> They are but broken lights of Thee,
> And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

Does this mean that we are all to desert our denominational and sectional allegiances ? By no means ! For every denomination has its own distinctive contribution to make to the life of the whole Church. But this contribution can only be effective on two conditions. It must be brought into the common stock and not hoarded in isolation, and it must not mistake its own truths for the whole truth.

Christendom has been rent asunder by the tendency to lift secondary matters to the same level as the essentials of the Faith. Either we must be content to remain for ever divided or we must learn to recognise that diversity may be not only tolerated but welcomed within the One Catholic Church, which is the Body of Christ.

The general result of scientific advance in the nineteenth century was to create confusion in religious and philosophic thought. The rapid

increase of knowledge submerged the old landmarks, and Christianity seemed to be faced with the alternatives of retiring within its own citadel and defying modern thought, or making terms with triumphant materialism. But to-day there are many indications that we are passing into a constructive period. There is a growing demand for what is positive in thought and expression; a resentment against mere negations. The younger generation is in open revolt against the inhibition of contemporary Christianity, but is eagerly responsive to affirmations that speak the language of sincere conviction. Beyond all question, the world needs religion to-day with an urgency that cannot be exaggerated. In the last half-century material inventiveness has outstripped moral progress, and the civilised world is in danger of being destroyed by the forces that it has called into being. That which should have been for our good has become to us an occasion of falling. Yet the vast majority of mankind do not ask much of life. They face its dull routine with patient courage, and look out wistfully on the mysteries of birth and death, vaguely hoping that life is not as futile as it seems. It is not by supercilious denunciation of their "superstitions" or even of their "sins" that the Church will win them for Christ. The Churches must learn to share their Master's great love for the common people and His deep understanding of their needs. It is the sign of the Kingdom that

the poor have good news proclaimed to them, and the greatest constructive task before the Churches is the rediscovery of the Gospel. In saying this we are not, I hope, identifying ourselves with the great army of querulous critics who find a gloomy satisfaction in discussing the failure of the Churches. The Churches have not failed; they have saved modern civilisation from rushing down a steep place into the sea and perishing in the waters; they have kept alive a witness to the significance of spiritual values and the reality of the Unseen. Yet there was a spontaneous gladness in early Christianity that does not seem to be characteristic of the Christianity of to-day. Public worship often seems rather an attempt to work up a jubilant spirit by mass suggestion than the natural expression of a gladness that sings because it must.

Generally speaking, it may be said that the modern world does not *enjoy* its religion. Have we grown too familiar with the light, and so lost the thrill of dawn; or do we need to be converted and become as little children that we may enter into the Kingdom of Gladness? What is the Gospel that will be "glad tidings of great joy to all people"? As an interpretation of the meaning of Reality Christianity must abide the challenge of every rational inquiry, and must interpret any assured truth in philosophy or science or history. Yet we must constantly remember that what Jesus Christ brought to the world was not a new philosophy or

even a new ethical system, but a new evangel. He came not to satisfy men's thirst for knowledge, but to give a new dynamic to moral life.

There is a sense in which Christianity is essentially pragmatic. The plain man often sees this more clearly than the theological expert. His question is, " Does it work ? " And the plain man is troubled to-day, not about the relations of science and religion or the more abstruse doctrines of the Faith, but by the haunting doubt whether Christianity does work in modern life. The attack on the ethical teaching of Christianity has not as yet shaken his belief in the value of the moral ideal that Jesus Christ presented to men. But, like Browning's Pope, he asks, " Well, is the thing we see salvation ?" It is easy to answer that Christianity has made human life far better and happier in those parts of the world where it has had time to shape the forces of national life ; that the repudiation of Christian standards of conduct would mean the relapse of modern civilisation into barbarism. Yet the plain man is not satisfied. He sees Christianity apparently impotent in face of modern industrial conditions, and the menace of war, growing daily more horrible with the advance of scientific methods of destruction, of sexual licence and racial antagonisms. If he strays into our churches and hears us singing :

> We are not divided, all one body we,
> One in hope and doctrine, one in charity,

it seems to him that we are singing what is plainly untrue.

We may think his impeachment unjust ; we may point out that he is " bearing " the shares of an undertaking in which he is not a shareholder, yet *fas est ab hoste doceri*, and the plain man is not an enemy, but a bewildered well-wisher. Christianity still has his vote to be true if it can.

And let us remember that the plain man is the man for whom Christianity exists. It is not the intellectual problems of our age, urgent as they are, that constitute the main matter with which we have to deal. The question that men are asking to-day is : Can Christianity turn life from a dull routine to a glad adventure ? Can it arouse the conviction in men who feel themselves mere cogs in a ruthless machine, that " this cold mechanic motion is not the life God fashions or reveals " ? The real problem that confronts the Churches is not the open hostility of opponents—for a Christianity that aroused no hostility would not be the Christianity of Jesus Christ—but the extent to which, throughout the civilised world, Christianity is regarded as an exhausted force, capable still, as in Russia to-day, of resisting attack, but unable any longer to lead the march of human progress.

If we could believe that the purpose of Christianity was to gather a few elect souls in every generation out of the ruins of human society, we might be content to devote ourselves to the intensive culture

of the little tracts of land reclaimed from the desert. But He who had compassion on the multitude because they were as sheep having no shepherd had a larger purpose of redemption than this. It may be true, as a great Church leader has recently said, that our greatest need is " not more Christians, but better Christians," but the better is only a means to the more. There is no greater danger in religious life than an intensive culture that is not balanced by a corresponding extensive growth.

The truth is, the plain man is not much interested in our theological controversies. He breaks into our discussions with the question " What is your gospel ? " In the confusion of modern life he wants a star to steer by, a hope to live for, an assurance that he is not a homeless wanderer in a meaningless universe.

We have not to invent an answer to his question, for the answer was given long ago. We must not treat Christianity as an interesting ruin from which we may quarry stones for building a new structure on modern lines. We cannot rebuild our churches whenever architectural fashions change, or remould our doctrines with every change of intellectual outlook. Our business is not to rebuild but to restore—to cut down the ivy that blocks the windows, to clear off the whitewash that hides the frescoes. The difficulty about theologians is that they feel obliged to carry with them all the luggage that the Church has accumulated

in its march through history. Equipped with the two great creeds as a summary of necessary truth, the temptation to " superadd a few essentials more " has proved irresistible, with the very dangerous result that the layman is asked to take on trust a great body of doctrine that he cannot hope to understand, till, like the sick folk of old, he cannot come near to Jesus Christ for the press.

I have set before myself no such ambitious task as the restatement of Christian doctrine, the achievement of which can only come through the concerted labours of many men. All that we can hope to do is to see something of the nature of the opportunity that lies before us, and so be of good cheer as we look forward to the Christianity of the future.

I will close this chapter with some words of a Bampton Lecturer more than twenty years ago :

" I believe that we are on the verge, if indeed we are not unawares in the midst, of one more great Religious Movement, perhaps the greatest the world has known. The principle which inspires it comes, on the intellectual side, from our old enemy and helper Science in the doctrine of the Unity of all Life and Force ; on the social side, it appears in the reaction against that exaggerated individualism which, like Cain of old, denies corporate responsibility ; its religious aspect is a quickened belief in the brotherhood of all men in Christ. I have called it a religious movement,

and it is essentially religious; but if accredited religions will have none of it, it will go on, nevertheless, inevitable and irresistible. But if it is Christianised, if it is fearlessly claimed for Christ and guided by His Spirit, it will make the world Christian." [1]

[1] James H. F. Peile: *The Reproach of the Gospel*, p. 169.

CHAPTER II

THE PRESENT SITUATION

ANY attempt to forecast the future of Christianity must begin with a survey of the tendencies of the present. Unquestionably we are at the beginning of a new chapter in the history of religion. The great changes through which human thought has passed in the last hundred years have involved Christianity in controversies, the true significance of which we are at last beginning to see. The air is still full of the dust of conflict, but I believe that these particular battles are over, and that we can now in some measure estimate our gains and losses.

The greatest change in human thought in the nineteenth century was the spread to all departments of knowledge of the scientific method. Modern scientific research has been marked by three special characteristics :

(1) It has claimed for its hypotheses no authority but that of experience.

(2) It has shown a fearless regard for truth, even when that regard involved the reconsideration of what seemed well-grounded conclusions.

(3) It has been international to a far greater degree than contemporary theology.

Appeal to experience, loyalty to truth, catholicity of outlook—Christianity need never have been

afraid of research carried on in this spirit. Yet many Christian thinkers were desperately afraid, and their fears played into the hands of those who were glad to use the teachings of science to discredit the Christian religion. But at last there are signs that this dismal period of distrust and misunderstanding is coming to an end. Several things have helped to bring about a better understanding.

1. Christian thought has accepted the idea of evolution, and is learning to recognise it as the method of Divine revelation in the kingdom of grace as well as in the world of nature. We think now in terms of process, and we know that neither in nature nor in religion can we "account for" the product by tracing the process by which it has come to be. We have escaped from the delusion that the worth of an organism or an institution can be disproved by the discovery of the lowly ancestry from which it has grown, and are gradually outliving the cosmic snobbery that refuses to recognise our "poor relations" in the animal world who have not shared man's intellectual and moral progress. And we have found a more inspiring idea in the conception of the ceaseless activity of God in the whole time-process than in the old naïve idea of a creative activity that came to an end ages ago, when God "entered into His rest."

2. If God is the Maker of heaven and earth

there cannot be any irreconcilable divergence between science and religion, since both are dealing with the same set of facts, approached from opposite sides. The conflict of science with religion, of which we heard so much fifty years ago, was mainly due to the attempt of each to invade the territories of the other. Religion, as such, has nothing to do with the structure of matter, or the process of organic evolution, while science must, for its own purpose, ignore the spiritual values which are the supreme concern of religion.

3. While religion has been overcoming its distrust of science, scientific thinkers have learned to recognise the limitations to which they are subject. The naïve simplicity of the popular scientific teaching of a generation ago has given place to a deeper sense of the ultimate mysteries that lie beyond the little circle of light within which scientific research lives and moves and has its being. It is only the second-rate (or third-rate) scientist to-day who will claim that there is any necessary incompatibility between the Christian faith and the conclusions of modern science.

Leaders of science may reject Christianity on the same grounds as other men do, but we are entitled to point out that an eminent physiologist or chemist is not necessarily a specially competent judge of matters that lie outside the range of his particular studies. Theology is the oldest of the sciences and can appeal to a much vaster range of

human experience than any other. It must face the future with an open mind, but it need not be greatly disturbed if its younger sisters sometimes seem inclined to push it on one side to leave room for their expanding energies.

4. Much of the *malaise* from which the modern world suffers is due to the one-sided character of modern education. The progress of scientific teaching has not been balanced by a corresponding progress in the teaching of art. This has been true throughout Europe, but I think it has been specially true in Great Britain and the United States of America. We have only begun to recognise that art—by which I mean the appreciation of beauty and the desire to create it—is as necessary for all true human life as knowledge. The penalty that we have paid for our neglect of art is the loss of the natural link between science and religion. For art, at its highest, is always sacramental. While science seeks from nature the secret of power, art is in quest of the secret of gladness. The aim of the scientist is fuller knowledge, the aim of the artist is deeper feeling. The method of science is analytic—in the rather unjust phrase of the poet, it "murders to dissect"—while the method of art is synthetic. If they are "halves of one dissevered world" it is a world in which religion may find itself at home. For truth, beauty and goodness are, we believe, the values for which life exists, and therefore the science that teaches

men to know, and the art that teaches them to admire, are sisters to the religion that teaches them to be. "We live by admiration, hope and love"; not (as we are beginning to discover) by passing examinations, or by improving the machinery of life while we leave its moral impulse uneducated.

There will be no formal reconciliation between religion and science, but each will follow the quest for truth in its own way, recognising that

> All experience is an arch wherethro'
> Gleams that untravell'd world, whose margin fades
> For ever and for ever as we move.[1]

Another controversy that may be said to be ended is that which arose through the application of the new scientific methods to the criticism of the Bible. I do not mean that the conclusions of Higher Criticism have been accepted throughout the Christian world, for this is not the case, but that the methods of modern criticism are now generally recognised as legitimate. In a later chapter we shall have to consider the bearing of this on the place of the Bible in the Christianity of to-morrow.

The changes of thought that belong to the later part of the nineteenth century have affected our religious outlook in another way. The recognition of the influence of environment on character, and

[1] Tennyson: *Ulysses.*

of the essentially social nature of human life, have helped to correct the exaggerated individualism that was a marked characteristic of English religion. Exclusive attention to personal salvation has given place to ideals of service and fellowship, and though the disappearance of the terrors of damnation has made life, for many "light half-believers," a less urgent moral responsibility, the altruistic impulse that has awakened throughout the civilised world is more than an adequate compensation. The twentieth century has been marked by a widespread interest in religion among educated people, but it is yet to be seen whether this will prove an asset for Christianity. Our unhappy divisions, and even more, perhaps, the strenuous activity of modern life and the pressure of economic needs, have alienated large sections of the people from organised religion. Active opposition to the Churches has given place to a prevailing indifference. Yet there are some signs that this phase is passing away. Among the workers of the world Jesus the friend of the poor has seemed to be an exile from our Churches, but there are hopeful indications that the Christian conscience is being awakened to the social aspects of the Gospel. The Stockholm Conference three years ago brought together representatives of all the great Christian Churches (except the Church of Rome) to consider the relation of the Christian gospel to the social and political problems of modern life, and the

measure of agreement that found expression in the findings of the Conference are a hopeful augury for the future.

A marked feature of the last half-century has been the disentanglement of the Churches from political associations. More than fifty years have passed since the occupation of Rome set the Pope free from his position as ruler of a petty Italian State, and though the leaders of the Roman Church have never ceased to demand the restoration of the temporal power, it seems to an outsider that the Church has gained far more than it has lost by its freedom from secular entanglements—a freedom that is not affected by the restoration of Papal sovereignty that has recently been secured. The disestablishment of the Church in France, harsh and inconsonant in its methods, has been followed by a revival of religion in that country ; and there are signs that the new freedom that has come to the Churches in Germany, Austria, and Czecho-Slovakia will be followed by a similar awakening. The Scottish Church has demanded and received complete spiritual independence, and recent events in England have raised a doubt in the minds of some of our Church leaders as to whether the present relations between the Church and Parliament are consistent with the sovereign rights of our Lord Jesus Christ over His Church. If the Free Churches should demand the sacrifice by the Church of England of its established position

as the price of reunion, there is little doubt that the sacrifice would be gladly made. The Church in India has recently freed itself from State control, and the Patriarchates of the Orthodox Eastern Church (except that of Constantinople) have been liberated from their subservience to Turkish authority, while in Russia the Church has exchanged the patronage of the State for the bitter hostility of the present rulers. In the United States the freedom of the Churches from State control is complete, and, indeed, some observers have felt that the political influence that the Churches are able to exercise may become a danger to the State.

This liberation of the Churches from State control has prepared the way for an even more important movement. Christianity has begun to recognise its Catholic or universal character. A century ago, Christianity was the religion of the white races, with a few ancient Churches, such as the Coptic and Abyssinian, isolated from the main stream of Christian thought and action. To-day the young Churches of India, China and Japan are developing a Christian experience of their own, and refusing to become entangled in the sectarian differences that are a legacy of the past history of Western Europe. Behind the forms of expression of European Christianity lies the common background of Greek thought and Roman organisation; but the Churches of China

and India are growing up with a different background of racial experience, and any attempt to impose on them a European type of Christianity is bound to fail. But as the Christian faith clothes itself in the forms of civilisations older and not less noble than our own, our inadequate interpretations of the fulness of its meaning will be enriched by the " glory and honour " that the nations bring to the adornment of the City of God. At last we are beginning to see what the great word " Catholic " means, as the vision of a world-religion, varied in its forms of expression, but " one in hope and doctrine, one in charity," begins to stir our hearts. There is no future for a Christianity that cannot think and act as one. As the Bishop of Dornakal said at Lausanne : " Divided Christendom is a source of weakness in the West ; in non-Christian lands it is a sin and a stumbling-block. If the non-Christian world is to be won for Christ, our message must be one. If our message is to be one, we must be one." The impotence of the Churches when confronted by the menace of the Great War in 1914 was a fearful warning of the moral disaster towards which Christendom was drifting. Christ was crucified afresh, and put to an open shame. Inadequate as our repentance has been, at least we have felt that the wrong done to Him can only be atoned for by a resolute effort to draw together the Churches in fellowship and co-operation, so that in the fulness of

time there may be one Church, speaking many languages and expressing its faith in many forms, yet knowing itself as one. The Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne and the International Missionary Conference at Jerusalem are signs of a movement in which the Spirit of God is drawing the Churches out of complacent isolation into a new consciousness of their interdependence. As yet, the Roman Church stands outside this world-movement, but no reunion is conceivable from which that great Church is excluded, and as the currents of this new impulse gather strength, they will sweep away barriers that now seem unsurmountable. The conviction that God wills union is beginning to grow, and though as yet we have hardly passed the stage of exploring our differences and shaking ourselves free from the dead weight of apathy and prejudice, the valley of dry bones is stirring, and our children's children, or their children, may see the day when the Catholic Church stands on its feet, an exceeding great army.

The call to Christianity to claim its place as a world-wide religion has grown more urgent as the old religions of the world have begun to disintegrate through the impact of Western secular civilisation. " No student of the deeper problems of life can fail to see that the greatest rival of Christianity in the world to-day is not Mohammedanism or Buddhism or Hinduism or Confucianism,

but a world-wide secular way of life and interpretation of the nature of things." [1]

The only alternative to Christianity as a world-religion is the materialism of Marx and Lenin—an unholy alliance of the doctrine of the Will to Power with a repudiation of the spiritual values that Christianity exists to maintain. To-day, the chief barrier to the spread of this anti-Christian internationalism is the passionate nationalism of the newly enfranchised peoples of the world. But this nationalism may be as definitely anti-Christian as the Bolshevism that it repudiates. Every loyalty to institutions and ideals may be consecrated by Christianity, but only while it remains subordinate to the supreme loyalty that every man owes to Christ, and to the humanity that He purchased with His own Blood. Love of one's Fatherland is a noble thing, but the sacred egoism of aggressive nationalism is only the more ignoble because it is the prostitution of a holy thing to evil ends.

Until the rise of nationalism in the sixteenth century, the lines of division of the civilised world were horizontal rather than vertical, and the deeper tendencies of our own time are in the direction of a new stratification, running across national divisions. This does not mean that national loyalties will disappear; but it means that the intellectual, commercial and industrial inter-

[1] Dr. Rufus Jones at the Jerusalem Conference.

dependence of the peoples of the world will foster the development of international organisations in which the common interests of humanity will find expression. The future of Christianity cannot but be affected by this tendency towards internationalism. The day of self-contained National Churches is nearly over. Yet the Church of the future is not likely to find expression in a close-knit and strongly centralised organisation like that of the Roman Church. If ever there is a Catholic Church, it must be more flexible, less distrustful of new truth, less hampered by the dead hand of tradition. For the present, any such Catholic Church lies far beyond our reach; the most that we can hope for is the gradual growth of the spirit of co-operation, of mutual recognition and intercommunion. It is not, I think, too optimistic to look forward to a League of Churches,[1] somewhat on the lines of the League of Nations. Even this would be a tremendous strength to the cause of Christianity; a greater strength, certainly, than a premature attempt to impose a common organisation on Churches that have come to regard autonomy as their inherent right.

The vital issue at present in religious thought lies in the sphere of ethics. The old ethical standards

[1] The "World-Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches" has done much to prepare for this League of Churches.

have broken down, and though the force of habit still keeps alive moral conventions, they rest on a precarious foundation when divorced from religious conviction. The younger generation is impatient of prohibitions that seem to find their sanction in Jewish Law rather than in the teaching of Jesus Christ. Many of the leaders of industry resent the claim of Christianity to a place in the ordering of industrial life, and international affairs are still conducted, for the most part, in frank disregard of any other principle than opportunism tempered by fear.

We must not draw too dark a picture. Kindness and courage are not dead in modern life—indeed, they are probably more widely diffused than at any previous period. There is an increasing demand for justice and fair-dealing, and even the widespread discontent in the world of labour, though it lacks the courage to recognise frankly its own share of responsibility for the abuses that it resents, has a certain moral value. Yet it remains true that the old moral standards are challenged, and that the challengers have nothing to put in their place.

The apparent impotence of the Christian Church in face of this ethical confusion is due, in part at least, to the fact that its own ethical standards are in confusion. When all allowance has been made for the prejudice of unfriendly critics, it must be frankly admitted that the Christian

Church has failed to give effective witness to the Christian ideal. We are not conspicuous for indifference to material gain, for humility and magnanimity. It is not merely that we do not reach the full standard of Christian morality ; it is that so many Christian men and women are content to regard it as an impracticable ideal, not seriously intended to affect the practical life of men. What has happened is not that the standard of behaviour among Christian people has deteriorated—I do not think that any such assertion would be true—but that our age is desperately in need of a moral ideal, and when we offer the moral ideal of Christianity as the answer to its need, we lay ourselves open to the obvious retort : " Do you practise what you preach ? " The special claim that we have made for Christianity is that it effected the union of religion and morality, and so achieved the end for which the Hebrew prophets laboured unsuccessfully, and which baffled the efforts of the great religious teachers of Greece and Rome. We can answer the critic who tries to separate Christian ethics from Christian doctrine and to set up the Sermon on the Mount as a new Decalogue ; but the critic who asserts that the union between religion and morality has broken down—that the moral standards of Christian men are not obviously higher than those of men who make no profession of religion—is not so easily answered. " There are spiritual values of a high order interpenetrating

the secular ranks. Men and women live for high and noble ends of life outside as well as inside the Church." That has always been true, and will probably always be true. Yet we Christian men and women ought to be better people than we are.

Any attempt to describe the present position of the various Christian Churches[1] lays the writer open to the charge of arrogance and prejudice, yet some effort to understand the strength and weakness of organised Christianity in the world of to-day is necessary for our purpose. Only a few words can be said about a subject that it would take a volume to treat adequately. I begin with the Church of England, which, ever since the sixteenth century, has shown a disregard for logical consistency which is thoroughly characteristic of English mentality. It has tried to be both Catholic and National, to combine a sober standard of worship with scope for individual enthusiasm, doctrinal orthodoxy with the spirit of free inquiry. It has paid the inevitable price for this comprehensiveness in the secession to Nonconformity of half the Christian people of England, and in the party antagonisms within its own society that make it appear, to the outside observer, much weaker than in fact it is. The Church of England has

[1] Properly speaking, there are no Christian Churches, but only one Christian Church—but usage obliges us to use the term. In St. Paul's Epistles "the Churches" were merely local groups within the Church.

been saved from disruption by the existence of a strong middle section of Churchmen, less vociferous than the partisans on either side, but not less sincere in their attachment to the historic traditions of Anglican theology. It is " common form " for the leaders of various schools of thought to assure us that this or that proposal, if adopted, would " split the Church of England from top to bottom," but the recent controversy on Prayer Book Revision has shown that the Church, when free from external interference, can appeal successfully to the loyalty of the majority of its members. The old Evangelicalism, distrustful of innovations, and inheriting a tradition of personal piety to which English life owes a great debt, is strongly entrenched through its control of patronage and its appeal to the traditional conservatism that is so strong a feature of English character. The positive convictions that won for it its earlier triumphs have now passed into the general life of the Church, and its danger is that it may find its bond of union in negations rather than in affirmations, and so become merely a party of protest. The Anglo-Catholic movement, like the Evangelical movement a hundred years ago, is a well-organised and vigorous minority-movement, backed by the enthusiastic loyalty of its followers, and counting among its leaders not a few of the ablest scholars in the Church. The struggle that it has carried on for nearly a century to gain a foothold in the

Church has left wounds that still smart, and a self-consciousness that shows itself in a disproportional emphasis on those aspects of truth of which it deems itself to be the guardian. The Anglican Church cannot afford to lose the gifts that it has to offer, and a more generous recognition of its right to a place in the historic life of the Church would do much to evoke the spirit of loyalty that has seemed to be lacking in the utterances of some of its leaders.

Modernism in the Church of England is rather a diffused tendency than an organised movement, though a small group of Modern Churchmen meets annually to reaffirm the right of free inquiry within the Church. Meanwhile the Anglican Church goes on, maintaining its witness against a policy of exclusion, striving, with inadequate success, to express in the forms of English life and thought the Catholic ideal for which it stands.

It has been a great gain to English religion that the attempt to suppress Nonconformity failed, for Nonconformity has kept within the sphere of organised religion a great company of Christian folk, who for political and social as well as for doctrinal reasons have felt bound to renounce their allegiance to the Established Church. The reunion of the Methodist Churches, which seems likely ere long to be an accomplished fact, will create a Christian society in England nearly equal in membership and resources to the Church of England.

Does this mean a set-back to the cause of a larger reunion? It may seem to be so, for a time, but I think a longer view will recognise that two organisations of approximately equal size may find it easier to combine without the feeling that either is being absorbed in the other. The difference of *ethos* between the Church of England and Methodism constitutes the strongest argument for a union, to which each can bring its own special contribution of Christian experience.

The English Nonconformist Churches form one group in the great family of Protestant Churches that control the religious life of Northern Europe and predominate in number and influence in the United States and in Canada. Protestantism may be seen at its best in Scotland,[1] where a series of unions have brought most of the Christian folk once more into one Church, which has successfully vindicated its right to complete self-government. The Episcopal Church of Scotland is much more than a mere outpost of Anglicanism, but the Presbyterian system is very deeply rooted in Scottish history, and will not easily be displaced by any other.

The Churches of North Germany and Scandinavia are still dominated by the great figure of Luther,

[1] In writing of the Church of Scotland as a Protestant Church, I do not want to be thought to minimise the significance of the fact that the Church, in its Articles Declaratory, affirms its adhesion to the Catholic Faith, as well as to the Reformation.

and while German scholarship has been engaged in the reconstruction of Christian dogma—a task carried on with great courage and not a little recklessness—the evangelical tradition has persisted in the parochial life of Germany. But the subject of German religious life and thought is much too large and complicated to be dealt with in a few paragraphs.

The large group of Churches that accept the title of Lutheran extends over all Northern Europe. "The Evangelic Lutheran faith has, after the Roman Church, the largest number of national Communions." These Churches include "between seventy and eighty millions of baptised people."

"The Protestant Churches of America enrol nearly thirty million men, women and children as actual members. Reckoning numbers as the Roman Church computes them, that is to say, including all baptised and adhering constituencies, that would mean a Protestant population of nearly sixty-five millions. Ministering to these there is an army of nearly two hundred thousand ordained clergymen. . . . This vast body of Christians in America is divided into some one hundred and fifty denominations." [1]

The religious life of America is marked by the vigour and something of the crudeness of youth. Protestant America is more interested in social welfare and moral "uplift" than in dogma or

[1] Stockholm Conference Report, p. 79.

worship. To a greater degree than the English Free Churches, it has retained the traditions of its Puritan ancestry. It does not share the distrust of material wealth that was characteristic of mediæval Catholicism; and it has been charged (perhaps rather unjustly) with building its churches for the comfort of man rather than for the glory of God.

It would be difficult to find a more complete contrast, in outlook and experience, than exists between the Protestant Churches of America and the Churches of the Orthodox Eastern Communion. Yet the Orthodox Eastern Church has much to contribute to the Christianity of to-morrow. It has shown how the autonomy of national churches is possible within the unity of the Catholic Church, and the great price that it has paid for its fidelity to the Faith of the Undivided Church gives it a special claim to the affectionate regard of all Christian people. The theologians of Western Europe are only beginning to discover how much they can learn from the Orthodox Eastern Church, whose doctrine of the Church is a corrective both to the exaggerated individualism of Protestantism and to the bureaucratic centralisation of the Roman Church. The Russian Church is cut off from the general life of Christendom by the fiery trial through which it is passing, and the decline of Constantinople to the status of a provincial town in the new Turkish Kingdom has affected the position of the Œcumenical Patriarch. But the Patriarchate of Jerusalem

has risen to new importance, and if the Christianity of to-morrow finds in Jerusalem—as it well may—the focus of its co-operative activities, the Orthodox Eastern Church may find, in the reconciliation of Christendom, the noblest task to which any Church could be called. For this task it is well fitted. Holding fast to the traditions of the Undivided Church, and to the authority of Holy Scripture as interpreted by the Holy Spirit to the mind of the whole Church, its attitude to " those that are without " is much kinder and more generous than that of the Roman Church. " Although the Orthodox Church considers unity in faith a primary condition of reunion of the Church, yet it rejects that exclusive theory according to which one Church, regarding itself as the one true Church, insists that those who seek reunion with it shall enter its own realm. Such a conception of reunion, amounting to the absorption of the other Churches, is in every way opposed to the spirit existing in the Orthodox Church, which has always distinguished between unity on the one hand and uniformity on the other." [1] It would seem, then, that the Christian Churches tend to fall into five great groups, each one of which has its distinctive gift to bring to the life of the whole. The strength of the Roman Church is in its organisation and discipline, evoking, as they do, a fine spirit of loyalty. The Orthodox Eastern Church is the

[1] Archbishop Germanos at Lausanne Conference.

teacher of all the Churches in the matter of worship. Its characteristic hymn, as has often been said, is not the *Dies Iræ* but the *Gloria in Excelsis*. Lutheranism has its "inwardness" and sense of the value of personal piety—the "Church in the Home" that has been its strength. The Protestantism of America and of the English Free Churches has its moral idealism and instinct for practical service; while the Anglican Church is fitted by its comprehensiveness to form a "Bridge Church," a connecting link between all the Churches.

CHAPTER III

THE ETERNAL PURPOSE

WHEN Newman wrote of his religion as resting on "the thought of two, and only two, absolute and luminously self-evident beings—myself and my Creator"—he revealed one of the causes of the failure of Christian thought to meet the impact of scientific inquiry. The idea of God, detached from its relation to the universal order in which it finds expression, loses its full content and value, while the isolation of the individual from the social environment in which he lives and moves and has his being leaves him a mere centre of consciousness floating adrift in an unintelligible universe. The Christian gospel requires a wider background if it is to meet the needs of man's wider knowledge. We cannot any longer be content with an idea of salvation that leaves man unrelated to the whole purpose of the universe. So we must face the question: "Has the universe a purpose that our human minds can hope to understand?" We know now that scientific thought cannot escape from the idea of purpose; that the conception of creation as a gradual process compels us to ask towards what end that process appears to be moving. The final answer to that question lies far beyond our reach. From the standpoint of the Eternal, the whole time-process

may be only an episode—though it cannot be an episode devoid of meaning—and man a by-product in an evolutionary process that has vaster ends in view. Yet a by-product may be of great value, and so far as this world is concerned, man is the final product of the long process.

I have said that the time-process may be only an episode, but in reality there is no reason for supposing that creation has either a beginning or an end.[1] If we believe that creative activity belongs to the Being of God, that His gladness lies in self-expression, we may conceive of mankind, not as destined to a static hereafter, but as sharing in the Divine adventure of ever-renewed creation in an infinite universe.

> God tastes an infinite joy
> In infinite ways—one everlasting bliss,
> From whom all being emanates, all power
> Proceeds ; in whom is life for evermore,
> Yet whom existence in its lowest form
> Includes ; where dwells enjoyment there is He ;
> With still a flying point of bliss remote,
> A happiness in store afar, a sphere
> Of distant glory in full view ; thus climbs
> Pleasure its height for ever and for ever.[2]

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[1] Some such idea seems to be involved in Dr. Caird's thesis "that by its very nature, Infinite Mind or Spirit has in it a principle of self-revelation—a necessity of self-manifestation to and in a world of finite beings."—Caird : *The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity*, vol. i, p. 144.

[2] Browning : *Paracelsus*.

From the first, Christian thought interpreted the whole time-process Christologically. In this the Logos doctrine of St. John is entirely in harmony with the teaching of St. Paul and of the Epistle to the Hebrews. The Logos doctrine looks back to the beginning, and sees in the pre-incarnate Son the archetype of all creation; the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews represents the Son as "bearing on all things by the word of His power"; while St. Paul looks forward to the eternal purpose of God "That in the fulness of time He might gather together in one all things [the totality of things] in the Christ."[1] Can we translate this great conception of the eternal purpose into the language of to-day? We must begin by thinking of the Creator, not as the supreme artificer, but as the supreme artist, for it is in art that man comes nearest to the exercise of creative activity. Art is the achievement, by effort and sacrifice, of that which is already present in the mind of the artist. The true artist must

> Image the whole, then execute the parts—
> Fancy the fabric
> Quite, ere he build, ere steel strike fire from quartz,
> Ere mortar dab brick.[2]

He may fail by devoting his technique to the service of an unworthy ideal, or through inability

[1] Eph. i. 10.
[2] Browning: *A Grammarian's Funeral.*

to embody in form or colour or language the whole of his thought. The thought of the perfect artist would be the complete expression of his whole self, and his achieved creation would completely express that thought. So eternally present in God is the Thought [1] that is the full expression of His whole Self [2]—" the effulgence of His glory, the expression of His essence " [3]—and in that Thought is included all that will ever come to be—" all things came into being through Him, and apart from Him no single thing that exists came to be." [4] Only as included in that Thought of God has anything a place in the realm of reality; only in fulfilling that Thought is the purpose of creation achieved.

Yet thought is not creation. The artist loves his thought, and wills to express it in objective form, that he may enrich the world with the gift of the thing of beauty that lives in his own soul. So the will to embody His Thought—that Will that theology has taught us to call the Holy Spirit, ever present in the Divine, yet ever going forth from the Divine, calls into being the framework of

[1] The word " Logos " includes the ideas of thought and of utterance.

[2] " In the New Testament Scriptures there are several remarkable passages which represent the course of the actual world as only the temporal manifestation of what has existed ideally and eternally in the mind and purpose of God."—Caird: *The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity*, vol. i, p. 76."

[3] Heb. i. 3.

[4] St. John i. 3.

time and space within which, through the long process of evolution, He is still

> Torturing the unwilling dross that checks His flight
> To His own likeness, as each mass may bear,
> And bursting, in His beauty and His might,
> From trees, and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.[1]

Through age-long effort and self-oblation, God the Holy Spirit is making the Body of Christ—creating a universe that shall fully embody the Eternal Thought of God. Creation is not an act done long ago, as the priestly author of the creation story pictures it, but a process still going on. Could God have achieved His purpose in some other way? Perhaps the question is futile; but there seems a law deep in human life that the highest joy can only be won through suffering, the glory of achievement only through effort. Does this law belong to the permanent structure of the spiritual universe?

Evolution is the progressive realisation of the purpose of God. But here we must take account of the fact that evolution is not a continuous process of orderly advance. There are stages at which new potentialities emerge. The principle seems to be that when order has been achieved in one line of progress a new factor is introduced which at first breaks into the order with the force of a new initiative. One such stage is the appearance

[1] Shelley: *Adonais*. I have changed his "Its" to "His."

of *homo sapiens*, a being capable of developing powers of volition and mastery over the natural world, crowned with glory and honour and set over the works of God's hands. Shall we dare to say that in calling such a being into existence God was making a great experiment ?

The experiment failed. The race called into being for the glory of God sought its own glory. St. Paul describes sin as " coming short of the glory of God." So we reach the supreme wonder—the inconceivable manifestation of Divine love when He who was in the form of God emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. On the very battleground where the purpose of God seemed defeated that purpose was triumphantly reasserted ; in the very human nature that had failed, the Divine Thought found a vehicle for the expression of Himself. And through the vehicle of that human nature there came to man not only a new revelation of God but a new reinforcement of spiritual power. The godward march of mankind began again under a new leader, whose Spirit became a new endowment of strength and insight to His followers.

I think we can understand the Incarnation best when we think of it (as the Greek Fathers did) as a moment—so far as this world is concerned, the supreme moment—in the creative activity of God. The human nature that became the vehicle of the Incarnation was a true human nature, behind

which lay the whole process of evolution. Now that we no longer believe in inherited guilt, we are not obliged to qualify this statement with supposed safeguards. We can accept the truth that "He was made in all points like unto His brethren."[1] But this does not mean that Jesus was a man endowed in a unique degree with the Divine Spirit. It means that a Reality that was subjective in the Being of God became objective in the sphere of time and space by the creative Will that willed man's highest welfare. Would it be fantastic to say that God thought about humanity and its need till His Thought became human ?

If we think of the Incarnation in this way we see that to describe the Resurrection as a miracle is to do much less than justice to its real meaning. A human nature saturated with God could die, for death is a normal human experience, not a punishment incurred by human sin. But if the Incarnation was an actual Divine experience, how could that experience pass into the Being of God except through the lifting up of the human nature that had been the vehicle of that experience into the world of eternal reality ? "To the Greek Fathers the Resurrection, like the Incarnation of Christ, was a supremely *natural* event. The Logos who was in the world from its beginning, who created and sustained it from the beginning, finally manifested Himself as man—which (as

[1] Heb. ii. 17.

some of them held) He had purposed to do from the beginning; in such a world as ours, where death reigns, the supreme manifestation of Life and of Divine Intelligence could not be thought to end in the grave. Nothing was more natural than for Him to rise again." [1]

The thought of the Incarnation leads us to the subject of the place of humanity in the purpose of God. "It is He Who hath made us and not we ourselves." What motive lies behind that creative act? There is only one possible answer, though it may take various forms. "Man's chief end," says the Shorter Catechism, "is to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever." Even better is the answer of our Collect, "That we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name." God made man that there might be in His universe a new order of beings on whom He might lavish His love, and who might love Him in return. This is the final answer to all those conceptions of human destiny that deny the permanence of human personality. If the end of man is to be absorbed in the Universal Soul—if creation is a closed circle that merely returns to its beginning—then moral effort has no value and human life has no meaning.

Yet we must beware of the opposite danger. The gathering together of all things in the Christ does not mean the gathering into the eternal

[1] E. W. Hobson: *The Domain of Natural Science.*

world of a vast multitude of people, each one a separate and detached centre of consciousness. Human thought is always prone to confuse individuality with personality, yet the distinction between them is fundamental. It is not as individuals, but as persons, that we have our place in the purpose of God. This matter is so important that we must examine it in some detail. The ego that enters at birth (or before birth) into the sphere of human relationships grows gradually into the consciousness of its individuality :

> As he grows he gathers much,
> And learns the use of " I " and " me,"
> And finds " I am not what I see,
> And other than the things I touch."
>
> So rounds he to a separate mind
> From whence clear memory may begin,
> As thro' the frame that binds him in
> His isolation grows defined.[1]

Individuality means definition by exclusion. " I am I because I am not you." It is the self-protective shell that the ego builds around itself. It has no moral value ; on the contrary, it has been the cause of the selfishness and self-assertion that have filled the world of men with strife and discord.

But within this shell of individuality man is meant, by the grace of God, to grow into a per-

[1] Tennyson : *In Memoriam.*

son.[1] What is personality? Its special characteristic is inclusiveness. God is the only perfect Person, for God only includes all reality in Himself without losing His Own identity. The name that we give to this power of inclusion is love. Love is the

> Feat which, done, would make time break,
> And let us pent-up creatures through
> Into eternity, our due.[2]

"I am I because I am not you" has now become "I am I because you are no longer external to me." Instead of facing inward, and so dwindling into insignificance, the ego faces outward and grows. A world of individuals is like a universe of stars and systems crashing together in confusion; a world of persons is like the universe of order of Meredith's sonnet:

> Round the ancient track marched, rank on rank,
> The army of unalterable law.

For love is the "unalterable law" of the spiritual universe, the gravitation that holds together each centre of consciousness in an ordered system.

How, then, does an individual become a person?

[1] "Out of the flux and confusion of the life of the instincts, the unity and compactness of personality has first to be created and acquired. No man is born a personality; everyone has first to make himself into a personality by obedience towards another instinct, which leads to unity and homogeneity. Freedom and creation constitute the secret of personality, but this self-creation of personality is, of course, no absolute creation in us finite creatures who emerge from the stream of life and consciousness."—Troeltsch: *Christian Thought*, p. 51.

[2] Browning: *Dis Aliter Visum.*

We might put the question more simply by asking how a man becomes unselfish. And the answer is: "By an act of self-surrender." Here is the great paradox of Christianity, "He that loseth his life shall find it."

At the heart of our religion lies the glory of death. "I am crucified with Christ." The old self-centred individual has died, as he deserves to die.[1] A new person has been born. For only as persons are we capable of fellowship with God. Through the hard crust of individuality God cannot penetrate: the answer is still "I am I because I am not you." But the answer of the new-born person is "I am I because I include Thee." I am no longer an independent and self-contained centre of consciousness. I am not God—God forbid!—but the frontiers of my life are no longer defended against the inflow of God through every avenue of my being. It is only as persons that men can be swept into the triumphant march of the Divine purpose,

> Not left in God's contempt apart,
> With ghastly smooth life, dead at heart,
> Tame in earth's paddock as her prize.[2]

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[1] "As in knowledge, we rise above the sphere of individual opinion into the universal life of intelligence, so, in the moral or practical life, we rise out of the sphere of individual impulse, of self-indulgence and self-assertion, into a sphere in which we will no ends but those that are common to all spiritual beings and enter into a life that is one with the universal and infinite will."—Caird: *The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity*, vol. i, p. 189.

[2] Browning: *Christmas Eve and Easter Day.*

All this has no meaning unless we believe that there is a universe of persons akin in its vastness and variety to the material universe, and that in this universe, "ordained and constituted in a wonderful order," humanity has its appointed place to fill and its special experience to bring. Evolution has shown us how the material universe constitutes the raw material of this spiritual universe, how out of star-dust God makes saints. It is often said that the purpose of creation is the development of values. Would it not be more true to say that the purpose of creation is the making of persons (not only human persons, for we are not the lords of the universe) through whom values may find expression? In the words of Dr. Caird:

"Religion is the absolute self-surrender of the soul to God. It means the giving up or annulling of the private, particular self, of every interest or satisfaction that belongs to me as this particular individuality, and the blending or identification of my will, and potentially of my whole life and being, with the will of the Infinite. In responding to the divine command, we wholly renounce that former self as false and evil, die to it and its affections and lusts, and put our whole will into that higher, truer self which is one with the being and life of God.

"What St. Paul seems to point to as the distinctive principle of the Christian life, is an annulling of the life of self and of all selfish desires and

impulses, and a blending of my will with the will and mind of Christ so absolute that, in a sense, my private, particular self may be said to have become extinct and my very being to be absorbed and lost in His. So close, so nearly approaching to identification, becomes this union with Christ that, not in a figure, but in a most real sense, we become participants in the spirit and virtue of His life and death, sharers in His condemnation of sin, in His divine sorrow and sacrifice, in His sense of the misery of estrangement from God, and in His sense of the joy and blessedness of reconciliation with the Father of spirits." [1]

Does all that we have said mean that the purpose of human life is to fit a few elect souls for survival, while the rest follow nature's waste products into oblivion? Is man only potentially immortal? One answer to this question—the survival of vast multitudes of mankind doomed to eternal separation from God—the moral instinct of Christian men has at last refused to accept. Whatever may be true about the future of mankind, the Jewish Gehenna, which became the mediæval Hell, is untrue.[2] The doctrine of conditional immortality has seemed to some earnest men to correspond most closely to the maturest teaching of Holy

[1] *Op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 231.

[2] It must be true that a *damnum eternum*, an eternal loss, is involved in every deliberate rejection of good; but the symbolism in which this is expressed has become associated with so much that is grotesque and horrible that it no longer rings true.

Scripture. Others have believed in a further probation after death for those who have missed the spiritual opportunities of this life ; and a few have felt drawn to the idea of reincarnation. Of one thing at least we may be sure, that whatever survival value there may be in any human life will in the end be gathered into the garner of God. " There shall never be one lost good." If it were possible for any man to remain so self-centred that he had destroyed his own capacity for responding to the love of God, that life would be destitute of survival value, and would, we may suppose, go back into the " great heart of nature," not as a waste product—for in truth nature has no waste products —but as part of the material of the great workshop

> Where God unmakes but to remake the soul,
> He else made first in vain ; which must not be.[1]

It is on the law of the conservation of values that modern thought has built its strongest argument for personal immortality. There is little doubt that belief in a future life has, among large sections of people in the modern world, ceased to count as an effective influence, and the attitude of many of our leaders of thought towards the whole matter is one of frank agnosticism. It is possible that some day Psychical Research may offer convincing evidence of the survival of the ego as a conscious entity, but in the meantime the strongest evidence

[1] Browning : *The Ring and the Book.*

that we can offer is that the teaching of the greatest of all religious teachers has no meaning or value apart from the assumption that man is immortal. "If it were not so, I would have told you." And this definite assertion is, we believe, confirmed by the verdict of modern philosophy. In his Gifford Lectures, Dr. Bosanquet has brought out very clearly the idea of reality as a *whole*. "Contradiction is a mark of unreality." But this wholeness is not the wholeness of an empty Absolute, in which existence and non-existence become identical. The Monism that identifies God with the Absolute, and regards all else as relative, and therefore, ultimately, unreal, is not only inconsistent with human immortality, but inconsistent with all rational thinking. A whole without parts is as inconceivable as a book without pages. True, the whole is always greater than its parts, and the parts acquire meaning in relation to the whole, but they are never merely "adjectival." "The deeper the spiritual unity, the more profound the personal distinctions appreciated and maintained in and by that unity. The better the society the more clearly defined the individuals composing it, realising themselves in it, through whom it expresses itself. The conclusion which is drawn to the effect that the finite individuals are made to disappear, as personal entities, in the only ultimately real not only has no warrant in the only evidence available, but is directly against both the superficial and the deeper

character of that evidence. When once this is clear the whole stress of Bosanquet's argument is really in favour of the doctrine of immortality." [1] When all has been said, the doctrine of personal immortality is, like the doctrine of God, a venture of faith—not of irrational faith, but of faith that is primarily a moral intuition. "Whoever believes in a God," said Rothe, "must also believe in the continuance of man after death. Without that there would not be a world that could be thought of as realising God's purpose."

"If there be a God," says Dr. Caird, "and if, as Scripture teaches, and the deepest thought of philosophy seems to prove, He is a Spiritual Being, the Father of all spirits, then we need not fear that this treasure, which now for a time we hold, as it were, in earthen vessels, will ever be lost."

It is only in relation to the Eternal Purpose that we can think rightly of sin. It is probable that the Christianity of to-morrow will think of sin less as a positive evil from which we are delivered by salvation—a view that makes salvation mainly a negative experience—than as the failure of a soul to attain to the freedom for which it was made. Sin is bondage in a universe of freedom ; sin is futility in a universe of purpose ; sin is egoism in a universe of service. In every act of sin the soul drifts out of

[1] F. W. Butler : *Christianity and History*, p. 59. On the whole subject, see Pringle-Pattison : *The Idea of God*, especially Chapters XIV and XV. Ward : *The Realm of Ends*.

the great stream of the purpose of God into a stagnant backwater. And the joy of Salvation lies in the consciousness of being swept again into the mighty current of the Divine purpose.

Men may be restrained from wrong courses of action by the conviction that, in the long run, they do not pay ; but sin goes much deeper than action, and has to do with "the thoughts and intents of the heart." The truth is, until a man has fallen in love with God he cannot see sin as a wrong done to God, a failure to co-operate in the fulfilment of the Eternal purpose "to which the whole creation moves." A declaration of war against a hostile universe might seem heroic even though it might also seem futile ; but if the universe "means intensely and means good"—that is, if God is love—the declaration is still futile, but loses all claim to be heroic.

Modern psychology is helping us to think of sin in another way. Sin is disorder, the inner conflict that St. Paul describes in Romans vii. Thus regarded, sin is a disease of the will, and can only be cured when all the discordant impulses of our nature are directed to one purpose. Browning's Sordello is the study of a soul too great to find in human love, or ambition, or patriotism, an adequate unifying power,

> A soul above his soul,
> Power to uplift his power—such moon's control
> Over such sea-depths.

In the end, the poet suggests, in rather obscure language, that what Sordello needed was the revelation of God as incarnate. It is in the recognition of the purpose of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ, that the soul is delivered from the "body of this death." The revelation of the Divine Ideal becomes the way of salvation. In Jesus Christ man sees human life as God meant it to be, and every true impulse of his nature reaches up towards the vision splendid. And in that act of aspiration he yields himself to the Will of God, which is the Holy Spirit. "Reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord," he is "transformed into the same image —from glory to glory—even as from the Lord the Spirit,"[1] till in the microcosm of his own life the eternal purpose is fulfilled in the gathering together in one of all things in the Christ. And this is salvation, the final achievement of personality in a universe of infinite love.

[1] 2 Cor. iii. 18.

CHAPTER IV

JESUS CHRIST

A GOOD many years ago Professor von Harnack asked the question: "What is the essence of Christianity—*Das wesen des Christentums?*" The answer is that the essence of Christianity is Jesus Christ. What does this mean? During the last century a great company of scholars have devoted themselves to the study of the life of Jesus, and as the outcome of their labours we probably know Jesus better than any generation of Christians since the days when men knew Him by personal contact. We know Jesus better, but we are not so certain about many details in His life and teaching that were formerly regarded as beyond question.

How do we know any great character of history? Not, assuredly, from a mere chronicle of what he said and did. We need to know the impact of his personality on those who were in the closest contact with him, to see the outcome of his life in the next generation. It is a well-recognised fact that after-times often know a man better than his contemporaries. So the legends that gather round the career of a great man are often nearly as valuable, for an estimate of his character, as authentic facts. The cloud of legend that quickly gathered around the life of St. Francis of Assisi helps us to recover the portrait of the little man of Assisi. We do

not feel obliged to defend, as historical fact, every event recorded in the gospels. I believe the earliest gospels—St. Mark and the document that we call Q—reach a high standard of historical reliability. If some legends find a place in St. Matthew's gospel, they show us what men felt to be congruous with the character of the Jesus of History. No one can deny that from the study of the gospels there emerges the living picture of a great personality, unlike any other figure in recorded history.

Modern investigation has revealed to us the many-sidedness of Jesus. To Renan He was a romantic hero; to Seeley a social reformer, inspired with enthusiasm for humanity; to a whole school of German scholars, a teacher of ethical liberalism; to Schweitzer and his school, an Apocalyptic dreamer. In a remarkable recent book, Dr. Klausner has treated of Him as a Jewish moral teacher, while Dr. Stanley Jones, in *The Christ of the Indian Road*, has set Him in the framework of Indian life. So the process of interpretation goes on, and still much remains. In truth, the Jesus of History evades our classifications. He is a Jew of the first century, steeped in the traditions of His race, yet His contemporaries felt Him to be a stranger in the world of Judaism. He was tender and kind, charitable in His judgment of men, yet He made the most exacting demands on His followers. He was humble, and devoid of personal ambition, yet He set forth the most startling claims. He

seemed to be the Messiah—the Christ—yet He refused to fill the rôle that popular hope had assigned to Him. He mixed with men as a man, sharing their experiences and accepting their conventions, yet always with an inner aloofness, as one who belonged to another order.

There are many portraits of Jesus that we can accept, but there are some that we must repudiate. The unfortunate fact that "mild" rhymes with "child" has led to this most unsuitable epithet being attached to His name. A less appropriate description it would be hard to find. For mildness suggests just that sentimental feebleness that makes some pictures of Jesus so unreal. It was not a mild Jesus Who drew to Him the passionate devotion of the rough fishermen who formed His earliest disciples, and evoked the reluctant admiration even of His enemies. Manliness was a characteristic of the Jesus of History.

Nor, again, can we accept the portrait that represents Him as habitually sorrowful and depressed. True, He fulfilled in His death the prophetic prediction of the "Man of Sorrows," but He Whose word to His disciples was so often "Be of good cheer" could not Himself have been of a sad countenance. He found the world a good world in spite of its sin—how could it be otherwise if it was His Father's world?—and loved common people and simple things.

I have said that we know Jesus well, but in

truth do we know Him at all? He moves with easy familiarity through a world where the air seems too rarefied for us to breathe, and we behold His glory, full of grace and truth. We start our study of the life of Jesus seated in the critic's chair, but before we have finished our task we find ourselves on our knees. Dr. Warschauer closes a recent *Historical Life of Jesus*, written from an advanced critical standpoint, with these words:

"So all the partial and partially-expressed longings of mankind—for a King whose dominion should be an everlasting dominion; for a Son of Man Who should also be the Son of God; for a suffering servant of the Lord, whose stripes should be for His brethren's healing; a Divine Saviour, Who by His voluntary death should redeem His followers from the bondage of sin—all these aspirations have been realised in Him and in Him alone, Whom we hail as the Way, the Truth and the Life."

All this is true even if we could isolate the synoptic record from the whole body of Christian experience in which it is embedded. But we cannot so isolate it. The theory that Jesus was a great religious teacher and martyr deified by the uncritical devotion of His followers breaks down because it does not account for the facts. There never was such a human Jesus as the scholars of the nineteenth century tried to recover. Before our records begin, men and women were offering

to Jesus Christ the adoration that belonged to God alone, and trusting their lives to Him with the quiet confidence of absolute assurance, counting all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord.

The first fact about the early Church that we must recognise was its conviction that Jesus was alive—not alive like the souls of men living in the dim shadow-world of Sheol, but alive as a triumphant victor over death, enthroned at the heart of the spiritual universe as King of all human destiny. I think that was the essence of the gospel that St. Paul preached in the great cities of the Empire, with the full approval of the other leaders of the Church. Somehow, on the way to Damascus, there had come to Him the conviction that Jesus was alive—that Christ crucified was Christ regnant. To the early Christians, the experience of the Holy Spirit was the evidence of the same truth. Jesus was alive and in touch with them, for it was the Spirit of Jesus that came to them. It has often been pointed out that St. Paul almost identifies the Holy Spirit with the glorified Christ. Indeed, he could not do otherwise, for the Holy Spirit was the Hand of Jesus, reaching down from the eternal world to strengthen and guide His disciples. The author of the Fourth Gospel—whether St. John or another—had known Jesus in the days of His flesh, but the Jesus Who filled his thoughts was One Who was alive for evermore and had taken

His human experience into the very life of God. To him the vision that came to St. Paul outside Damascus had become the "master light of all his seeing."

A man may deny the truth of all this and accept the idea that the greatest religious revolution in human history was founded on a delusion, but he cannot reasonably deny that this is what Christianity meant—and means—for if Jesus was alive then He is alive still, to be adored with grateful love and served with whole-hearted devotion.

Does this mean that we are shifting the centre of gravity of Christianity away from the cross? No, but it means that we are thinking less of the cross and more of the Crucified, less of the act and more of the Person. The death of Jesus was a demonstration of the love of God; but it was much more. It was the liberation of a Life that had been straitened by human conditions, that it might fill the spiritual universe with the fragrance of its sacrifice and the glory of its achievement. "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death."

It is not strange that the early Christians should have failed at first to find language adequate to express the tremendous truth that, for them, had transformed all life. The early addresses of St. Peter, as the report of them reached St. Luke,

seem to suggest that Jesus was a man Who had won His exaltation to the throne of the universe. But soon the conviction arose that that exaltation was not only a reward but also a return. The great Christological passage in the Epistle to the Philippians[1] is not an isolated rhapsody, but a statement of accepted truth introduced almost casually in an exhortation to humility and service. This, unquestionably, was what the Church believed within a generation of the death of Jesus, probably before any of the gospels were written, and many years before the author of the Fourth Gospel found in the word Logos a new way of expressing an already accepted truth.

It is significant that the earliest challenge to Christian belief took the form of a denial of the reality of the humanity of Jesus. One of the motives of the Fourth Gospel was, it would seem, to meet this challenge by showing how really the Word became flesh, how Jesus shared human experience of weariness and sorrow and pain and death. Pfleiderer opens his lectures on the *Early Christian Conceptions of Christ* with these words: "It is to the great and abiding credit of the

[1] "Who, existing in the form [essential nature] of God thought it not a thing to be grasped at to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the form [essential nature] of a bondservant, being made in the likeness [similitude] of men: and being found in fashion [external appearance] as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross."—Phil. ii. 6–8.

scientific theology of the nineteenth century that it has learned to distinguish between the Christ of Faith and the man Jesus of history, two entities which have been identified by ecclesiastical dogma." I doubt whether any competent Christian theologian to-day would be prepared to endorse this verdict; certainly it was exactly this separation that the early Church refused to accept. Its experience was rooted in history, for it had come through events that really happened.

The Incarnation raises problems that have perplexed the minds of theologians ever since the beginning of Christian theology—problems with regard to the limitations of the human knowledge of Jesus, of the interrelation of two wills in one person, and others. We cannot evade these problems, but we shall probably find in the end that they are insoluble.

The last authoritative statement of the whole Church on the relation of the Divine and the human in the Person of Jesus, drawn up at the Council of Chalcedon, merely states both sides of the problem, and repudiates as inadequate the solutions that had been propounded by Eutyches and Nestorius. Modern psychology is approaching the point at which it may help us to restate the doctrine of the Incarnation in terms that will not conflict with the theology of the Councils, but will also be intelligible (so far as a great mystery can be intelligible) to men trained in modern ways

of thinking. We must begin with the "ego" or "self." It is useless for the psychologist to try to reduce the individual man to a mere bundle of sensations. There is something that holds together these sensations in a permanent unity. Round this "ego" or "self" there grows a body and a soul (or mind) as the organs of contact between it and the world. We believe that the self includes much more than can be expressed through these organs of contact, and Christianity teaches that it is the purpose of God to clothe the self with organs through which it can fully express all its capacities, and so expand into all that He has made it to be. This is what St. Paul means by being "not unclothed but clothed upon by the body that is from heaven."

> The Lord let the house of a brute to the soul of a man,
> And the man said, "Am I your debtor?"
> And the Lord—"Not yet; but make it as clean as you can,
> And then I will let you a better."[1]

The inadequacy of body and soul to meet all the needs of spirit is not wholly due to sin—though sin has increased it. It is inherent in the relation of matter to spirit. Words are an inadequate vehicle for the expression of thought; and the universe is an adequate expression of *all* the glory of God. So spirit can only use matter by accepting limitation. If we ask too much of body and

[1] Tennyson: *By an Evolutionist.*

soul we break the instrument, as Sordello did when he tried

> To put all
> That nature forth, forcing our straightened sphere
> Contain it, to display completely here
> The mastery another life should learn,
> Thrusting in time eternity's concern.

The bearing of this on the problem of the Incarnation is obvious. Even a perfect human body and mind cannot express the whole Being of God. The question is sometimes asked whether we are to suppose that Jesus, in the days of His flesh, knew Himself as the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. Perhaps the answer is that such knowledge could not find expression through any true human nature.[1] To many of us it seems that any attempt to define the self-consciousness of Jesus savours of presumption. We do not understand ourselves; how can we hope to understand Him? There are times in most lives when

> Through love, through hope and faith's transcendent dower,
> We feel that we are greater than we know.[2]

[1] "Whatever of Divinity could not organically unite itself with and breathe through a human spirit, was not and could not be present in one who, whatever else he was, was really and truly human. The Divinity of Christ was not that of a divine nature in local or mechanical juxtaposition with a human, but of a divine nature that suffused, blended, identified itself with the thoughts, feelings, volitions of a human individuality."—Caird: *The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity*, vol. i, p. 14. (For reasons that the reader will understand, I should wish to change the last word to "personality.")

[2] Wordsworth: *Duddon Sonnets.*

We believe that Jesus lived a real human life, and shared a real human experience. Yet there are two facts to be noted in that experience. The first of these is His consciousness of unbroken communion with God. To say that He was sinless is to say much less than the truth. His whole life, as recorded in the gospels, was a life of complete self-identification with the will and purpose of God. Then there is a second fact. Jesus spoke as one Who was master of His own life. His death was not a misfortune that He would not avoid, it was a way that He chose to take. "No man taketh it [My life] away from me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again."[1] May we not find in these facts a key to the understanding of the Incarnation? He willed to accept human conditions—to be the ego or self that acted with a human body and thought with a human mind, while living still in the spiritual world of eternal reality. If it be objected that this involves the idea of a life lived simultaneously in two spheres of being, we may answer that this is true even of human lives. Our ego or self has its place in a world of spiritual reality, of which we are vaguely conscious at times, and which is other than the world of material things within which we act and think. Only "gleams like the flashing of a shield" are vouchsafed to us, for human life would become unreal

[1] St. John x. 18.

if we lived in the constant consciousness of the sphere of being that lies "above" or "beyond" or "within"—it matters not what word we use, for no words can express a reality that lies outside the time-space order. Perhaps it is along some such lines as these that we may hope to find fresh light on the meaning of the Incarnation. The human ego or self lives in a sphere of being normally above the level of consciousness, while growing in wisdom and stature in a world of men, till at death it gathers to itself the experience of its human pilgrimage as a permanent possession. So we may think of the ego or self of Him Whom we call the Son of God as willing to be made like unto His brethren, that He might gather into His eternal Being a true human experience, which becomes a universal human experience as it takes all true human experience into itself—not sin, for sin is no part of true human experience. So it is true of every human life that He will "gather His wheat into the garner, but the chaff He will burn up with unquenchable fire." So, in the mystical language of St. Paul, the Incarnation means Christ in every man and every man in Christ unless by his own act he withholds his life from that all-embracing fellowship.

> Himself conceived of life as love,
> Conceived of love as what must enter in,
> Fill up, make one with His each soul He loved;
> Thus much for man's joy, all men's joy for Him.[1]

[1] Browning: *A Death in the Desert.*

Since Jesus was the Christ—the Messiah—it was natural that Jewish Christians, who formed the great majority in the Church at the beginning, should associate Him with the Messianic ideas that had found expression in Apocalyptic literature. They could not at once disentangle the permanent significance of the Messianic office from the national and temporal associations that had gathered around it, or recognise that symbolical language must be interpreted symbolically. So they believed that He would return in glory to judge the world within the lifetime of some who had known Him in the flesh. We can trace the waning of this hope in St. Paul's later Epistles, and the development, in the Epistle to the Ephesians and in the Fourth Gospel, of the deeper thought of a Coming that was to be the constant experience of the Church.

Jesus came not to bring to mankind a new ethical system, like Confucianism, but first of all a gospel. So Christianity asserted that there was at the heart of the universe One Who could be " touched with the feeling of our infirmities " ; that every human life would be judged, in the end, by One Whose purpose was not to condemn but to save. Jesus Christ has not only the value of God; He is (may we say ?) the face through which God looks out on His world, and through which a redeemed world looks back on God. " We see the light of the glory of God in the face

of Jesus Christ." [1] As Bishop McConnell said at Lausanne: "More and more even those who do not believe in God admit that if there were a God, and if He could make a revelation of Himself to men, they could not suggest any qualitative improvement in the story of Jesus as given us in the Gospel. Modern criticism has made this clear—or clearer than it was once. It is a part of the good news of the Gospel."

"The Church is concerned not merely to maintain the God-likeness of Christ, but also the Christ-likeness of God. This may seem to be a fine distinction; but fine as it may be, it is significant just now as marking a shift of emphasis in theological accent from that which we used to hear a quarter-century ago, a shift characteristic of Christianity thinking in world terms. The former debate spoke in terms of the divinity or deity of Christ. The present emphasis is more on the Christlikeness of Deity." [2]

In formulated theological thought, as in the Creeds, we begin with theism before we reach Christianity, but in the actual experience of life it is through Jesus Christ that we arrive at any conception of God that gives value and meaning to human life. It is still by Him that we come to the Father.

We have considered the personality of Jesus

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 6.

[2] Report of Lausanne Conference, pp. 56–7.

before dealing with His teaching. I am persuaded that in doing so we are taking things in their right order. For He taught by what He was more persuasively than even by what He said or did. I hope the Christianity of to-morrow will refuse to build up enormous superstructures of ecclesiastical or moral claim on isolated texts, often detached from their original associations. The result of textual criticism ought to have taught us all that in building on isolated texts we are building on a very insecure foundation. Christian ethics must rest in the future, much more than in the past, on the general character of the teaching of Jesus. There is urgent need for a restatement of Christian ethics on these lines, for the idea of relativity has invaded our conception of morality, and there is no Holy Catholic Church to whose judgment we can appeal. Such a restatement lies far beyond the scope of this book. I can only venture to suggest some of the features in the teaching of Jesus on which I think the Christian ethics of to-morrow will tend to concentrate.

But first we must notice two recent views of the teaching of Jesus.

(1) The study of rabbinic literature has served to show how much of that teaching can be paralleled in contemporary or nearly contemporary Jewish writings. It would be strange if it were not so when we remember that Jesus founded His ethical teaching on the Deuteronomic summary of the law.

But what Jesus did not teach is nearly as important as what He did teach for the understanding of His point of view. In the welter of rabbinic teaching, high idealism and fantastic puerilities are mixed in inextricable confusion. In the teaching of Jesus the dross disappears, and only the pure gold remains.

(2) The view of the German Apocalyptic school was that our Lord was convinced that the end of the age was close at hand, and so only provided his disciples with an *interimsethic*—a body of rules to guide them in the short interval before the end. There are some sayings reported in the gospels that might seem to imply a belief in the coming of the Day of the Lord in the near future, but there is no utterance of which the genuineness is more certain than His saying that neither He, nor the angels of God, knew when that Day would be. But if the moral teaching of Jesus was not an *interimsethic* in this sense, it was so in another sense. He saw life as a pilgrimage, and called men to set themselves free from the complications and entanglements that hindered them on their homeward journey. He regarded great possessions as cumbering the traveller with too much luggage. He enjoined consideration for our fellow-travellers, and courageous trustfulness about the future. The conception of life as a pilgrimage inevitably involved a change in the standard of values. Many of the things that men regarded as best

worth striving for seemed to Him of little value. His teaching seems to echo the question of the prophet, " Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not ? " How often we fail to understand that teaching because in the complicated life of to-day we have lost His spirit of detachment.

Nothing is clearer in the teaching of Jesus than this, that He had no intention of providing a body of legislation for His followers. He enjoined on them obedience to the Jewish law, while warning them against the Pharisaic spirit that bound on men's backs burdens grievous to be borne. The test that He applied to these traditions of the elders was, did they minister to human welfare ? The law was made for man, not man for the law. His earliest controversies with the authorities were due to what they regarded as the dangerous liberalism of His teaching. When compared with the heavy burden of legalism, His yoke was indeed easy, and His burden light—easy, but exacting, since it demanded of men not reluctant obedience to a legal code, but glad surrender to the will of God. So motive counted for more than act. Good deeds done to win the praise of men, or in hope of corresponding return, lost moral value, for the only verdict on human acts that mattered was the verdict of God. Right thinking becomes supremely important, as in the story in Codex

Besæ, which may be an authentic incident.[1] So the man who cherishes hatred in his heart is guilty of murder; the man who indulges in impure thoughts is guilty of adultery. We might summarise this aspect of His teaching by saying that He shifted the centre of gravity of morality from conduct to character. Many of the sins denounced by the prophets are hardly referred to in His teaching. He does not denounce (except incidentally) commercial dishonesty, drunkenness, gluttony, slander, sexual impurity (other than adultery), bribery and other sins. Assuredly this was not because He regarded these matters as unimportant; it was rather that He regarded them as symptoms of a disease whose roots lay much deeper in human life. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit." Jesus accepted the Deuteronomic summary of the law in the twofold command to love God and our neighbour. The love of God is a response, for God has loved us first; the love of our neighbour is an invitation, for we are to love even our enemies. But two questions arise, "Who is my neighbour?" and "What is love?" We are always in danger of taking too sentimental a view of love. It is not primarily an emotion but a principle of conduct. When Baron von Hügel

[1] "On the same day, seeing one working on the Sabbath, He said unto him: 'Man, if indeed thou knowest what thou doest, thou art blessed: but, if thou knowest not, thou art cursed, and a transgressor of the law.'"

says that humanitarianism has been the most subtle enemy of Christianity, I suppose he means that the emotional appeal to love everybody expresses a much easier moral standard than the demand that we should treat with respect and consideration the men and women with whom life brings us into habitual contact, and whose claims and interests are much more likely to come into collision with our own. The principle underlying the command is illustrated by our Lord's treatment of sickness. He might have become a great faith-healer, encouraging crowds to come to Him for healing. This would have involved the abandonment of the real purpose of His mission, and His increasing reluctance to exercise His powers of healing is evident in the gospel story. Yet when He came into personal contact with individual sufferers, the claim of love became paramount, and He interrupted His work as a teacher to grant the physical boon that only He could give, as the Good Samaritan interrupted his journey to bring the wounded traveller into safety.

The two great obstacles that confronted Jesus as a moral teacher were conservatism and worldliness. By conservatism I mean the "fixed mind" that resents new ideas. His first demand was for a change of mind (*metanoia*), and there is no demand that men are more unwilling to meet. Nicodemus's perplexity at the demand, "Ye must be born again," is paralleled by the perplexity

of the disciples when Jesus told them that the only way into the Kingdom was to turn their lives right round and become as little children—to begin again.

The other obstacle was worldliness, by which I mean a wrong estimate of the purpose of life, based on a wrong view of God. In the minds of many of the people the Messianic hope had deteriorated into the expectation of a " good time," with well-stored cornbins and flowing winevats. The idea of goodness as a passport to the favour of God involved the idea of a God Who, in the words of the Puritan writer, " loved those that were godly, much disliking the wicked and profane." To men who thought thus, our Lord's friendship with publicans and sinners seemed an outrage, and even His disciples found it hard to understand how He could care so much for " ungodly " people. Their question, " We have left all and followed Thee, what shall we have therefore ? " was an echo of the question in the minds of the people. How could they accept a gospel that gave " unto this last even as unto thee " ?

In the inner circle of His disciples Jesus set Himself to develop those qualities that were needed most for their work as His messengers. There were three, I think, that He specially tried to evoke. The first of these was courage—the courage that rested on the assurance of His unfailing help, and feared neither men nor demons

nor hostile forces of nature. Those who have come into contact with primitive forms of heathenism know what it means to see this burden of fear lifted from human lives. Then, next to courage, humility. For "legitimate ambition," "proper regard for their own dignity," he substituted the law of service. By precept, and by example, He showed them the vulgarity of self-assertiveness. Then, lastly, He tried to develop in them the spirit of kindliness—all that is included in the much-abused word "charity."

Behind this process of moral education lay the demand for entire and unqualified surrender of their whole selves to His allegiance. "Follow Me" meant much more than "copy My example" or "carry on My work." It meant "give yourselves to Me in unreserved surrender; only then can you know the goal and the gladness of life." Perhaps the recovery of this truth may be one of the great achievements of our own age.

What place will Jesus Christ take in the Christianity of to-morrow? The earliest Christian creed was comprehended in three words—Jesus Christ is Lord. Is not this, in reality, "all we know on earth and all we need to know" about the greatest fact in the world?

I think the name Jesus will mean more, since we have recovered our belief in the reality of His humanity. The idea that the truth of His Deity can be protected by refusing to admit the limita-

tions inherent in any true humanity is almost as old as Christianity, and has persisted through all Christian history. In the popular religion of mediæval Europe it so obscured His mediatorial work that men prayed to the Blessed Virgin, and to saints and martyrs, not as honoured leaders with whom they might hold communion, but as intercessors more compassionate than the Son of God. We must hold to the truth of His humanity, for every human life gains its dignity and value from the fact that it shares the manhood of the Son of God. We can make no terms with the idea that He acted sometimes as man, sometimes as God. He was always man and always God—God acting through the vehicle of manhood, man drawing on all the resources of God. Every act that He did was an act of God, yet not less an act of man. There may be a sense in which it is true that every man has in himself something of the Divine, but what Christianity tells us is that Jesus Christ becomes the deepest self of every man who wills to open the inner doors of his being to the Guest Who waits to enter.

Then Jesus is the Christ—the Anointed—the Lord of all human history. He is not a Divine intruder into an order that other hands have fashioned. The evolution of the world is the coming of the Christ. And in the ebb and flow of human history He is still coming "like the glory of the morning on the wave." The Christianity

of to-morrow must learn to interpret all history Christologically. Then He is the Lord—the Master of all human destiny, to Whom no man dare offer less than all that he is and has. He will accept no divided allegiance, nor half-hearted service. There must be an end of the miserable compromises that have repudiated His authority over large tracks of human life. He is the Lord of all science, for He is the Truth that science is seeking to understand ; He is the Lord of all art, for He is the Life that all true art is trying to interpret ; He is the Lord of all politics and commerce and industry, for He is the Way by which the human order moves upward towards God.

CHAPTER V

THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD

THE beginning and end of theology is a true conception of God. It is only by His grace that we can have any conception of Him at all; we can only discover God in so far as He is pleased to reveal Himself. Yet this revelation is conditioned by man's capacity to respond; and what we mean by faith is just this reaching up of man towards God—"the desire of the moth for the star." If God is trying to tell us about Himself, agnosticism is irrational, for it means shutting the door through which He desires to enter the world of human experience—nay, has already entered, if Christianity is true.

There are many ways in which modern thought has tried to express its conception of God. Men have thought of Him as the sovereign ruler of all things, as the "Wisdom and Spirit of the Universe," as the Absolute in Whom all reality is included, as the "Power, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness." But the distinctive idea of God that belongs to Christian thought is His Fatherhood. The attribution of fatherhood to the gods is characteristic of many religions: Greece has its Zeus Pater, and the Norse religion its Odin the All-father. And the prophets and psalmists had learned to speak of Yahweh as the

Father of the people. But it was Jesus Christ Who gave content and meaning to the idea of the Divine Fatherhood. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me."

The return to the idea of the Fatherhood of God was a feature of nineteenth-century theology. Under the influence of this return, the inscrutable despot of Calvinism and the Carpenter-God of Deism passed unregretted into oblivion. It is quite certain that the conception of God as Father will dominate the Christian thought of to-morrow. The task that lies before us is to understand all that is involved in the name. The simplest idea suggested is that of origination. A man is the father of what he produces. To this is added the idea of care and protection. "Like as a father pitieth his own children, even so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear Him." Some years ago, a writer in the *Hibbert Journal* asked the question: "Is the Universe friendly?" The doctrine of the Fatherhood of God is the affirmative answer to that question.

Obviously the name is a challenge to all those forms of religious thought that deny the Personality of God. To speak of an impersonal father is to evacuate language of all meaning. If God is the Father of men He must possess in the fullest measure all the attributes of personality that belong to human fatherhood, for He is the architypal Father. "From Him," says St. Paul, "every fatherhood

in heaven and earth is named," [1] that is, derived. It is quite certain that Christianity stands or falls by the doctrine of the Personality of God. In fighting for this, we are fighting for our all. Yet we must make clear what it is for which we are fighting. " Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself "—that is the mistake into which men constantly fall. When we think of God as personal, we do not mean that God is a perfectly wise and all-powerful man. What, then, do we mean ? This, that in his self-consciousness, self-determination and capacity to love and understand, man is made in the image of God. The full-orbed Being of God is a reality far too great for our finite minds to understand. " He dwelleth in the light that no man can approach unto." Yet we do not really clarify our thinking by coining such words as Super-personal. We have already considered what personality means, and have accepted Lotze's idea that our personality is a faint and imperfect copy of that which is only complete in God. The only real alternative is Pantheism, which Dr. Illingworth describes as " materialism grown sentimental." For what is at issue is the moral character of God. It is only as persons that we can have any moral character, and a non-moral God endowed with omnipotence would be a monster to be defied, not a Being to be adored. Greek religion broke down, as every religion must break down, when

[1] Eph. iii. 14.

men found that they were better than their gods. So strongly have some modern thinkers felt this, that they have revived the old idea of a God benevolent in intention, but limited in power, with a Veiled Figure behind, of which, as of Brahma, we can only say that it is. The very foundation of Christianity lies in its repudiation of all this. Its "good tidings of great joy" were, first of all, that all the truth and beauty and gladness to which human aspiration looked up were eternally present in God. Christianity dares the tremendous venture of asserting the omnipotence of love. In face of the baffling enigmas of life, the apparent indifference of the universe, the insignificance of man in the cosmic process, it says that God is love. On what does it found this assertion? Not, assuredly, on any Freudian father-complex. In a remarkable way, the conception of Divine Fatherhood has purged religion of sexual associations. It is true that the idea corresponds to a deep-seated human instinct, but it is on the revelation of God given in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ that it depends for its vindication.

What, then, does the Fatherhood of God mean? There are concentric circles in the idea. God is, first, the Father of the Universe (the "Father of lights"), as the source and sustainer of all being. To call God Father means more than to call Him Creator. It is "a great and continuous venture

upon the beneficence of the universe, and, therefore, upon a certain Fatherliness in its inmost constitution and prevailing laws." [1] In so far as the modern resentment against suffering springs from hatred of cruelty and selfishness, it is a sign of moral progress; but in so far as it merely represents the poor-spirited schoolboy's dislike of discipline and the aches and bruises of the football field, it is an ominous sign of the invertebrateness that civilisation is liable to develop. Hysterical denunciations of the apparent cruelty of nature are often a mere surrender to emotional sentimentalism. The idea of God as a benevolent parent Who wants everyone to be happy has done more harm in modern life than can easily be measured. The truth is, God is a wise parent Who does not hesitate to inflict, or to endure, suffering if it serves a purpose of good. It does not follow that we can always understand what that purpose is. "No suffering seemeth for the present to be joyous, but grievous." In many of life's deepest issues "we have but faith, we cannot know." But life's best adventures are those that test man's endurance, and a world governed by the principle of "safety first" would be a world in which moral values would inevitably decay.

Next, God is the Father of all mankind. "Are we not all," said an Indian orator at a recent Conference of Religions, "the children of one

[1] Dr. Scott Lidgett: *God, Christ and the Church*, p. 14.

great Father in heaven?"[1] The revival of this truth has had far-reaching results in modern life. It has given the idea of human brotherhood a deeper significance, for, as has often been said, there can be no brotherhood without a common Father. "One is your Father, even God, and all ye are brethren." It has put to shame the indifference that tolerates industrial exploitation and slums and ignorance; and it has made national and racial antagonisms ignoble and intolerable.

Then the circle draws closer. Fatherhood can only find full expression through the response of sonship. It is only when we learn to say "Our Father" that the Fatherhood of God can enter into the fullness of its meaning. But how can we "call on Him as Father Who without respect of persons is judging every man's work"[2] if we are wasting His resources and ignoring His authority? Into the inner circle of sonship we have no right to enter. It is all very well to say that

[1] "Christian morality is first filial love of the heavenly Father, as manifested in the perfect humanity of His Son, and then, for the Father's sake, brotherly love of all the members of His human family."—Bishop Moorhouse: *The Teaching of Christ.* He quotes Abd-El-Kader's Address to the Tunisian Arabs: "Thus men are of the family of God, and the Lord loves those who seek to do good to His family. The human race is very dear to God, its Creator, and all His creatures, from the highest to the lowest, are meant for the service and benefit of the great whole which we call the human kind."

[2] 1 St. Peter i. 17.

the modern man is not thinking of his sins, but is he thinking about God? The teaching of Jesus Christ, as reported in the gospels, is singularly free from minatory suggestions, but no one who heard Him could doubt that the sons of God could only enter on their inheritance by being set free from worldliness and lust and every evil impulse. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses."[1] "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."[2] So it is in imitating the impartiality of the Divine giving by loving our enemies that we become "the children of your Father Who is in heaven."

It is only when we recognise the difference between this outer and inner circle of the Divine Fatherhood that we can see the significance of Christian baptism, for baptism is the sacrament of the Divine Fatherhood, as Holy Communion is the sacrament of the Incarnate Son of God, and Confirmation the sacrament of the Holy Spirit. Are we made the sons of God in baptism? Yes, and no. Baptism is more than a declaration of a sonship that is ours at birth. It is, in St. Paul's phrase, an "adoption." For baptism is an act of God; the Church offers a child to God that by His grace it may be admitted into the inner circle of His family. So

[1] St. Matthew vi. 15. [2] St. Matthew v. 20.

Dr. Darwell Stone writes of the unbaptised as "beings who are capable of receiving the great gifts of regeneration and life in God"; we "recognise in them the elemental sonship to God which is theirs because they were His creation and share the nature taken by the Son of God in the Incarnation, an elemental sonship which pleads for the higher sonship of the baptised."[1] And God admits all who come. There is no question here of a privileged class, specially chosen to sonship. No child need remain unbaptised, and, therefore, deprived of the assurance of God's grace enfolding its life from the beginning. Yet it still remains true that God's Fatherhood can only become effective through the response of the child to its Father's love. Where the response is not forthcoming, sonship remains dormant.

What are we to say, then, about unbaptised persons? Are we to leave them to the uncovenanted mercies of God? We cannot, certainly, treat baptism as unimportant or regard the obstinate refusal of the sacrament as other than a disregard of the command of Jesus Christ. Yet baptism is only a means to an end, and the end is the awakening of filial love in the child of God. It is as natural for a man to love God as it is for a child to love its father. Why, then, do men not love God? Because there is that in their nature—call it "original sin," "the corruption of man's

[1] Darwell Stone: *Holy Baptism*, p. 209.

heart," "the inheritance of an animal ancestry," "negativity"—that prevents free response to the Father's love. We are born into God's family in baptism in order that His grace, working in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure, may overcome this obstacle to our fellowship with Him. In so far as this obstacle is overcome, the purpose of baptism is fulfilled. Yet we cannot believe that God's grace is withheld from children who have, by the neglect of their parents or others, been deprived of the ordinance in which His Fatherly love finds expression. Not thus are the sins of the fathers visited on the children.

But if it be true that our Father's love goes out to all His children, why cannot men come back from the far country to the warmth and welcome of the Father's house? First, because they do not want to come. They are not ashamed of their adventure because they do not see that they have injured God in the only way in which men can injure Him, by misusing the freedom that He has given them. Secondly, because they are incapable of the moral energy that will cut itself adrift from the swine-troughs. Thirdly, because they have persuaded themselves that an inexorable moral law dooms them to reap what they have sown. They do not believe in the Divine love; they do not believe in the Divine grace; they do not believe in the Divine forgiveness. In a word, they do not believe in the Fatherhood of God.

There is no doctrine of the Christian Faith that more urgently needs restating than the doctrine of the Atonement. It was inevitable that at first it should clothe itself in terms of the Jewish sacrificial system; and in so far as that system was the expression of deep human needs, it looked forward to a reality beyond itself. But there is one fundamental difference. The Jewish sacrifices were acts of men—not less the acts of men because they believed that they were Divinely commanded—but the Atonement is, and must be, always and altogether the act of God. No man can offer a propitiatory sacrifice. It is not by the sacrifice of man that he is restored to his forfeited inheritance, but by the sacrifice of God. "The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." So the eternal love of the Father was demonstrated in time when the cross that was in the heart of God was set up on Calvary. Once for all, we must banish from our theology all idea of a change in the attitude of God effected by the death of Jesus Christ. That death was the result, not the cause, of the love of the Father. And we must also cease to attribute to God motives that all the penal codes of civilised peoples are leaving behind. A father does not punish his children in order to vindicate the claims of abstract justice, or to demonstrate his own moral rectitude. The only moral justification for punishment is, not that the wrong-doer may "get what he deserves," but that he may know that he has

done wrong, and broken the bond of fellowship on which the family life depends. The self that has sinned is never the true self in any man, for man was not made to sin. But Pelagianism errs in not recognising that equally truly man was not made to be an autonomous being. As there break in upon him impulses from the natural order out of which he is emerging—the world of the ape and tiger—so there must flow down to him supernatural grace from the order towards which he is moving. The doctrine of grace is absolutely fundamental to Christian theology. It is the very lifeblood of the Christian religion.

> We feel we are nothing—for all is Thou and in Thee ;
> We feel we are something—*that* also has come from Thee ;
> We know we are nothing—but Thou wilt help us to be.[1]

We can only respond to the initiative of God. So it is literally true that

> Every virtue we possess,
> And every victory won,
> And every thought of holiness
> Are His alone.

Man is not "conceived and born in sin," he is conceived and born with a nature capable of responding to the grace of God, as a plant draws its life from the soil and the sunshine, Why, then, do the plants in God's garden grow sickly and feeble ? The answer to that question belongs to the in-

[1] Tennyson : *De Profundis.*

soluble mystery of human life. But this at least we know, on the evidence of the experience of all the generations of the children of God, that when a man throws himself unreservedly on the grace of God he can and does

> Rise on stepping-stones
> Of his dead self to higher things.[1]

What is grace? It is the name that we give to the love of God when it finds expression in activity. Grace is all that love *does*. And love's supreme act of condescension was love's self-oblation—"the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." We reach the heart of the Atonement when we see in it the act in which the Father broke through the barrier that self-will and spiritual stagnation had interposed between Him and His children. So grace begets gratitude, for gratitude is the one response that men can make to the grace of God. No man was ever set free from the paralysis of sin by theories of the Atonement. To-day, as in every age of Christian experience, the transformation of human life is the outcome of the conviction: "He loved me and gave Himself for me." And therefore I must love Him and give myself to Him.[2] So

[1] Tennyson: *In Memoriam.*

[2] The very God! . . .
So the All-Great were the All-Loving too—
So, through the thunder comes a human voice
Saying, "O heart I made, a heart beats here!
Face my hands fashioned, see it in myself!

we enter the inner circle of the family of God by grateful acceptance of the undeserved favour that has reached down to lift us up. We take God's hand, and know ourselves as His children.

I think there is some danger in the modern tendency to rest the whole weight of religion on experience. For the question remains, "Experience of what?" The direct experience of the mystic may be valid for him, but the narrow way of mysticism is like a steep and lonely track up the mountain that can be climbed only by the expert mountaineer. Few there be that find it; and fewer still who return to tell us what they have seen. For us ordinary men and women experience must rest on some basis of objective fact, some act of God of which we can take hold. Just such an act we believe God wrought out in human history. We find our sonship at the cross.

Let us put the thought of the Divine Fatherhood in another way. There are three kingdoms within which humanity can live. There is first the kingdom of Force, where might is right and the weak must serve the strong. In the kingdom of Force God is conceived of as fighting on the side of the big battalions, and is identified with the forces of nature.

Thou hast no power nor mayst conceive of mine,
But love I gave thee, with myself to love,
And thou must love me who have died for thee"!
Browning: *An Epistle of Karshish.*

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Slowly humanity is struggling out of the kingdom of Force into the kingdom of Justice. War is beginning to be recognised for the fundamental hypocrisy that it is; reason begins to claim its right to be heard in human relationships; and the conception of right challenges the brute law of the survival of the strong. In the kingdom of Justice God is no longer identified with the blind forces of nature. He is now the All-sovereign Who renders to every man according to his work. From the injustice of the world there is an appeal to Divine justice. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?"

Above the kingdom of Justice lies the kingdom of Grace—the kingdom where it is demanded of a man that he should do more than justice to his neighbour, where strength is pledged to the service of weakness, and the standard of giving is not what a man deserves but what he needs. It is only in the kingdom of Grace that God is revealed as the Father Whose "tender mercies are over all His works," Who "giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not."

The outer circle of God's family is the kingdom of Force, for even the Maker of Heaven and Earth cannot impress a moral character on a universe where moral values are still dormant. The next circle is the kingdom of Justice, for if all men are sons of God every act of injustice is a wrong done to the Father. Then the inner circle is the kingdom

of Grace, where men are called to forgive as they have been forgiven, to give freely because they have freely received, to reflect in all the relationships of life the grace of the Father.

Within this inner circle lies another where, dark with excess of light, lies the impenetrable mystery of the Being of God. The ultimate meaning of Fatherhood is in the Godhead, for eternal Fatherhood has no meaning unless there is an eternal Sonship corresponding to it. Jesus Christ taught men to know that God was their Father, but He claimed for Himself a special and unique relationship, different in kind from that into which He admitted them.

When the early Christians invoked "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," they were tracing the idea of Fatherhood to its source. Can we in any measure understand what this means? Clearly it means that God is not a lonely Monad, Who was obliged to create a universe as a means of self-expression. All that fatherhood and sonship means, in the interchange of fellowship and service, of mutual dependence and fulfilment, finds expression within the Godhead. The concentric circles converge on this centre, and widen out again as the Fatherhood reaches out as a redeeming force to the utmost confines of the universe. The name that we give to this universal reaching out of the Fatherhood is the Holy Spirit, Who is both the Spirit of Fatherhood going out into the

world of men, and the Spirit of Sonship returning to the Father. "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, 'Abba, Father.'" [1] "We have access by one Spirit unto the Father."

From all this certain conclusions follow:

1. The only enduring foundation for all philanthropic effort is a true conception of God. The fantastic dream of an economic brotherhood with atheism as its religious foundation is the nightmare of a diseased society, hewing out for itself broken cisterns that can hold no water.

2. No conception of God can be true that leaves the idea of brotherhood a tale of little meaning. "This commandment have we from Him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." [2] Every class struggle, every racial antagonism, is an outrage on the Fatherhood of God. One of the most difficult lessons that we have to learn is the impartiality of the love of God. It goes out to the immature and the helpless—"It is not the will of your Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish"; it reaches out to all living things—"not one sparrow falleth to the ground without My Father's knowledge"; it takes account of the simple needs of common life—"your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things."

3. The truth of the Fatherhood of God is the

[1] Gal. iv. 6. [2] 1 St. John iv. 21.

foundation of all intelligent prayer. In hours of desperate need, men may besiege heaven with their petitions, and receive "help from above in their extreme despair." But prayer as a resource for emergencies has little in common with the prayer "to our Father Who is in secret" that is the constant habit of ordinary life, and in which fellowship is as strong an element as petition. The truest fellowship is often reached by sharing common interests, rather than by withdrawing to rapt contemplation. We learn to love God by caring for the things that He cares for, and it is in prayer that we express this fellowship in a common purpose. Father and son find companionship in the things that they do and discuss together.

4. Yet, true as all this is, it is not the whole truth. "Our Father, Who art in heaven; hallowed be Thy name"—the words are a warning against the almost jaunty familiarity that does not recognise the "numinous" character of the Fatherhood. What the Romans called *pietas* was the reverence due from a son to his father, and when the word was taken over by Christianity it came to mean the reverence that the children of God owed to their Father. God's condescension is no excuse for man's presumption. The godly fear that the Greeks called *eusebeia* must always be present in our approach to God.

A few words must be said in conclusion about the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Perplexed by

the paradoxes of the *Quicunque Vult*, the ordinary churchman is inclined to regard the doctrine as a liability from which he cannot escape rather than an asset over which he may rejoice. Much of his perplexity is due to the poverty of the Latin language, which obliged the Latin Fathers to translate the Greek *hypostasis* by the word *persona*. If we insist on speaking of "Three Persons in One Godhead," we must evacuate the word "person" of almost all that it has come to mean in modern life. There are not three independent centres of consciousness in the Godhead; three persons to whom we can pray. There is one Father of all, within Whose Being the Son, "Who is in the bosom of the Father," and the Holy Spirit, Who "proceedeth from the Father," as the Agent of the Divine activity, are eternally present.[1] The meaning of this lies within those "abysmal depths of personality," into which we can see only a little way. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity is fundamental to Christian thought, because it is the only view of God that is consistent with the belief that "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" and "the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" are not

[1] Students of theology will recognise that I am stating the doctrine as it was interpreted by St. Athanasius and the Greek Fathers, not in the more metaphysical form that it assumed in Western theology under the influence of St. Augustine and the Schoolmen. Yet it was St. Augustine who wrote, "Our thoughts of God are truer than our words, and His existence is truer than our thoughts."

subordinate influences from the spiritual world, but are the very acts of God Himself. God can touch human life in three ways because His Being is threefold. The only alternative to this is Arianism, and Arianism is the one heresy in the early Church that struck directly at the very foundation of Christianity. " He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father "—unless that is true there is nothing worth fighting for in Christianity.

Let us remember, in conclusion, that however confidently we may claim that the great doctrines of the Faith can abide the challenge of reason, it is not by the way of reason that we apprehend them. It is with the heart—which means, with the whole self—that man believeth unto righteousness. A man may " believe " all the articles of the Christian Faith without being a Christian, if his belief is merely an intellectual assent. Theology without religion is devoid of spiritual value ; a man must find the truth before he can formulate it—or rather, perhaps we ought to say that the truth must find him, and take possession of him, and " take from him all his armour wherein he trusted," and bring him into the servitude which is perfect freedom. Faith is the surrender to something stronger than ourselves. So Dr. Caird writes :

" The response of the Christian consciousness to the glad tidings of the Gospel, the spiritual appropriation of the great ideas of the Christian

revelation, the Fatherhood of God, the forgiveness of sin, the sinless perfection of the person and life of Christ, the call to participation in a life of Sonship and sacrifice akin to his own—the appeal which these and kindred ideas present to the believing mind, and the act of spiritual apprehension by which it responds to that appeal—are, in whatever way we describe them, wholly different from the intellectual assent to consciously and deliberately reasoned opinions or to the articles of a theological creed." [1]

[1] Caird: *Op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 41.

CHAPTER VI

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

THE Fatherhood of God and the Kingdom of God were the two central ideas around which all our Lord's teaching grouped itself. The idea of the Kingdom of God had its roots far back in Jewish national history, and had grown in content and meaning in the work of the apocalyptic writers. It represented the optimistic note in Jewish prophetic thought. "Whereas other nations looked sadly back to their golden age over a long series of successive declensions, Israel alone placed its golden age in the future. The religions of antiquity were pessimistic and despairing in their philosophy of history; the religion of Israel was a religion of hope." So the phrase had an historical background when Jesus came preaching the gospel of the Kingdom. "The Kingdom of God is at hand." From that time the Kingdom continued to be the theme of His teaching, right up to the time when, during the forty days, He is described by St. Luke as "speaking the things concerning the Kingdom of God."

In the course of the history of Christianity various views have been held as to what the Kingdom of God means. The apocalyptic idea of the Kingdom as an order to be established when the final judg-

ment had closed the record of human history has persisted in various forms throughout Christian times. Sometimes the Kingdom is identified with the millennial reign of Christ, but more often it has been regarded as the final consummation that would follow, "when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father." The idea of the Kingdom of God as an order to be established on earth owes its prominence in the Western Church largely to the influence of St. Augustine. Partly through a misunderstanding of his teaching, the idea of the Kingdom of God became identified with the claims of the Roman pontiff to "bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with links of iron." Calvinism also, though in a different way, identified the Kingdom of God with the rule of the saints, to be maintained, if need be, even with the sword. In later thought, there has been a tendency to identify the Kingdom of God with the ethical progress of civilisation, and also with the rule of God in the life of the individual. "The Kingdom of God is within you." [1]

Modern scholarship has done much to bring out more clearly the significance of the idea of the Kingdom of God.

1. The Kingdom (or Rule) of God is, first of all,

[1] There is an apocryphal saying of Jesus that may be genuine: "And the Lord Himself being asked by someone when His kingdom should come, said, 'when the two shall be one, and that which is without as that which is within.'"

the name for the final consummation of human history, when the whole company of redeemed humanity is gathered into an eternal order in which the will of God is fully done.[1] It is the phrase in which Christian thought asserts its belief that the purpose of God in human history will be achieved. No kingdom established in this world can be eternal. "Whether it is to be closed by some sudden catastrophe of the visible universe or of our little sun and system, or by the slow loss of the heat and energy which, while they are still unspent, make life possible on our planet, nothing is more certain than that the existence of man on earth has had a beginning and will have an end. And with it will end not only the works of men's hands, but, so far as this world is concerned, all the works of men's spirit as well. Not only flesh and blood, not only pleasure and pain, love and hate, emotion, thought and action, but all that man has made his own in the slow conquests of thought and morality and civilisation—the good, the beautiful and the true.

[1] "What was shown forth in its essence in the preaching of the kingdom has survived. It must be considered in a threefold sense. First, the kingdom of God is supernatural—a gift from above—and not a product of natural life; second, it is a purely religious good, the inner union with the living God: third, it is the most important and most positive thing that a man can experience, for it permeates and controls the entire sphere of his being, because it is the forgiveness of sin, the destruction of misery."—Harnack: *Das Wesen des Christentums.*

The death of our world will destroy both it and them. And immense as may be the ages still remaining for the life of our planet, the whole is finite, numbered and measured, not to our present knowledge, but none the less measured and numbered by laws in actual full operation." [1] This is the dream that haunts our Shakespeare :

> The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all that it inherit, will dissolve
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a wrack behind. We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.[2]

So thinks St. John : " The world passeth away, and the lust thereof " ; but he can add " he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." [3] Human life is a school where men are trained for their appointed place as citizens in the Kingdom of God. After school life we pass, if approved, into the Kingdom.

2. Yet the Kingdom of God is in the present as well as in the future. Every human life that accepts the rule of God comes into the Kingdom. May we not say that the Kingdom began when one human life showed itself perfectly subject to the will of God, so that Jesus Christ was the first subject of the Kingdom ?

[1] Robertson : *Regnum Dei*, p. 383.
[2] Shakespeare : *The Tempest.*
[3] 1 St. John ii. 17.

"The Kingdom of God is at once spiritual and historical; eternal and temporary; outward and inward; visible and invisible; a system and an energy. It is an order of things in which heavenly laws are recognised and obeyed. It depends for its origin and for its support upon forces which are not of earth. It is inspired by the principles and powers of a higher sphere. It implies a harmonious relation between men and the beings of the unseen universe. It places its members in a social and personal relationship with a Divine Head, as citizens to a King, as children to a Father —'the Kingdom of your Father which is in heaven.'"[1]

There is a distinction—though it may not be easy to define—between the idea of the Kingdom of Christ and that of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of Christ is a visible Kingdom, *in* this world though not *of* this world. It grows, not secretly but openly, for public confession is a necessary condition for admission into it. It merges at last into the Kingdom of God when "the Son also Himself shall be subjected to Him that did subject all things unto Him, that God may be all in all."[2]

3. The Kingdom of God is "not an ethical society, formed as an association of men and women extending its influence by merely human means. In its essential nature it is simply God's

[1] Westcott: *Social Aspects of Christianity*, p. 88.
[2] 1 Cor. xv. 24.

Kingship over the hearts of men, which subdues them to itself, unites them with God and then unites them with each other." [1] We must not identify the Kingdom of God with the gradual improvement of human society, the spread of education, better social conditions, and all the machinery of Utopia. The Kingdom of God is the assertion by God Himself of His sovereignty. It is " not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." [2] It is at once evolutionary and catastrophic. It is evolutionary because it grows from within outwards, a secret thing that is the expression of the immanence of God in human history, like the unseen forces of nature that mould the form of things. Yet it is catastrophic because its final manifestation is a new act of God. We have been accustomed to speak of this new act of God as the Second Coming of Christ. When we have disentangled this idea from its temporary apocalyptic associations, what does it mean? I do not think it means merely that the world will gradually become better and more Christian, till all men acknowledge His authority. The battle between the Christian Church and the anti-Christian forces of the world swings to and fro. The Church has its defeats as well as its victories. Carthage and Ephesus are in ruins, the Moslem call to prayer sounds

[1] The Bishop of Saxony at the Stockholm Conference.

[2] Rom. xiv. 17.

from the minarets of Alexandria and Constantinople. In Russia Antichrist rules on a precarious throne, "having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time." Over the whole continent of South America, with its population of eighty millions, the salt of the Christian ideal seems to have lost its savour, and "there is a real danger lest a secular civilisation should triumph over religion throughout the continent." The material advance of civilisation brings with it no guarantee of moral progress. The triumph of machinery may mean the degradation of man, the progress of science increases his destructive capacity. Few men who stop to think can look forward to the future without grave anxiety.

Nearly two thousand years ago, when a great era of human achievement drew to its close, and lacked the moral dynamic to renew its flagging energies, God intervened, and sent into the world a new spiritual force that is still the one effectual safeguard of the spiritual values of the world. A Divine event opens the new era of human history in which we live, and we believe that a Divine event will mark its close. We have reminded ourselves that evolution has its discontinuities; its new moments when it pauses to take breath before beginning again on a higher plane. The Second Coming of Christ means that another such moment lies still in the future. But does this matter to us, who can only hope to see far off

a promise of good? Yes, for it is the hope of His Coming that inspires us to keep the flag flying. We must serve the cause of the Kingdom, and "prepare the way of the Lord." It will be one of the tasks of the Christianity of to-morrow to translate the apocalyptic symbolism of the Bible into the forms of modern thought, but if it loses the hope that in the end the faith of all the generations of the children of God will be vindicated, it will lose the secret of its strength.

4. The conception of the Kingdom of God is a witness to the essentially social character of the Christian ideal. To believe in the Kingdom of God is to believe that salvation is not the perfecting of the individual in isolation, but the establishment of the sovereignty of God as the foundation of a true social order. The recognition of the personal relationship of every man to God was the greatest spiritual revolution of Old Testament theology. The conception of the Kingdom of God as more than the glorifying of the chosen people begins with Jeremiah's great prophecy of the new covenant: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their hearts will I write it; and I will be their God and they shall be My people; and they shall teach no more every one his neighbour, and every one his brother, saying know Jehovah; for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith Jehovah; for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will

I remember no more." [1] The exile in Babylon helped to deepen this consciousness of personal relationship with God, which finds expression in many of the psalms, and was carried on into New Testament theology. But when men lost sight of the corrective thought of the Kingdom of God, and chose "the less excellent way of a solitary path towards perfectness," the Church was conceived of as an ark of refuge rather than as a Divinely appointed organ for the redemption of humanity. "It would hardly be too much to say that after New Testament times the tragedy of the Christian Church has been that, in face of the proclamation made in and by the life of Christ that the way of spiritual realisation is a social way, men have preferred to be spiritual in an individual way." [2] Protestant theology has always tended to regard the Christian life as essentially individual, and only accidentally social, with the result that when the Christian goes out into the world of men he is tempted to fold away his religion as a sacred garment, not suited for the common affairs of life. But this matter of the social aspect of the Gospel will need a chapter to itself.

In connection with the idea of the Kingdom of God, two charges are often made against Christianity, with enough apparent justification to make it worth while to examine them. The first of these

[1] Jer. xxxi. 33.

[2] The Archbishop of Dublin at the Stockholm Conference.

is the charge of "other-worldliness." There is a sense in which Christianity is, and must be, other-worldly, and it is the lack of other-worldliness in modern religious life that is one of our chief weaknesses. But what is meant by the charge is that Christianity distracts attention from the actual needs and claims of our fellow-men in order to concentrate on golden harps and pearly gates.

Part of the answer to this charge belongs to the next chapter, but part may be given here. At Stockholm, Dr. Wishart quoted an inscription over an Indian mosque: "Jesus, on Whom be peace, hath said that this world is a bridge; you are to pass over it, and not to build your dwelling upon it." "Our business," he added, "is of course to get men across the bridge and into the celestial city, but it is part of that task to make this earth a fit threshold for entrance into heaven. If men are but to pass over the bridge and not to build their dwellings upon it, we can only prepare them for the ultimate city as we make that bridge clean and safe and comfortable and well lighted and beautiful. Thus alone shall our journey across the bridge prepare us for the homeland on the other shore." We might put the same thought in another way by saying that if we believe in the Kingdom of God we are bound to make this world as much like the Kingdom of God as we can, for "God's possible is taught by His world's loving." The Soviet Government has

adopted as its motto, " Religion is the opium of the people." We know that this is untrue, that most of the unselfish service done by man to man in modern life is done under the influence of Christian ideals. What we need is not the emancipation of the world from Christianity, but a stronger dose of Christianity, a little more heroism in the following of Jesus Christ.

The other charge that is often made against us is that our religion is only glorified selfishness. It must be admitted that the language of some of our hymns gives colour to this accusation. Yet it is clear that our Lord tried to discourage His disciples from following Him in hope of rewards. The rewards He offered them—on earth, fellowship, with persecution ; and beyond, eternal life—were open to all ; they were inherent in their new relationship with Him. But they would have no attraction for the man who did not welcome the Christian call.

In the earlier stages of Hebrew religion, it was generally supposed that long life and material prosperity were the reward of faithfulness to God. But this naïve belief broke down under the test of experience. Its epitaph stands written in the picture of the suffering servant of Yahveh, and in the Book of Job. The Christian man looked for his best reward in the commendation of his Master—" the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give to me at that day ;

and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved His appearing." [1] We want no reward that we cannot share with all our fellow-pilgrims. The soldier facing the wounds and weariness of the trenches has a right to find encouragement in the assurance that his endurance will be remembered with honour in the records of his country. The man who elects to " shun delights and live laborious days " in the cause of scientific knowledge has the right to hope that his name will not be forgotten when men reap the benefit of the work that he has done. But it is only the individualist idea of salvation that leads to an unworthy desire for special rewards. Against this spirit Jesus warned His disciples in the parable of the Prodigal Son, and of the Labourers in the Vineyard. It has no place in the Christian life, but is an intruder from outside.

Now let us turn to the question of the bearing of the idea of the Kingdom of God on some of the issues with which contemporary thought is occupied. To what does this idea commit us ?

1. We are committed to the belief that any true social order must begin and end with God. " In His will is our peace," and in His rule is our final good. The idea of the Kingdom of God is a direct challenge to all schemes of social reform that deny the spiritual basis of life. " Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 8.

these things shall be added unto you." No reshaping of political organisation or economic machinery can, in itself, bring us any nearer to the social order for which man was made. Of course we want our political and economic arrangements to be as efficient as possible, for clumsy and ineffective machinery means waste of human energy and deterioration of human character. But the ultimate question about all our social order is whether it is founded on a real belief in " the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." We are bound to affirm that—

> The acknowledgment of God in Christ
> Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
> All questions in the earth and out of it.[1]

We are bound to affirm this, even in face of the obvious rejoinder that points to the condition of the world to-day, and asks, " Well, is the thing we see salvation ? " The constructive side of this matter belongs to the next chapter, but there is one aspect of it that falls to be dealt with here. It is our belief in the Kingdom of God that has restored to us our consciousness of sin. So far as individual life is concerned, the rather morbid emphasis on personal depravity that was characteristic of some types of the older theology has been followed by a reaction. We do not now believe that " the heart is deceitful above all things, and

[1] Browning : *A Death in the Desert.*

desperately wicked," for we know how many impulses of good find expression even in lives that seem most handicapped by hereditary taint and unfavourable environment. Mr. Chesterton has described Browning as "a kind of cosmic detective who walked into the foulest of thieves' kitchens and accused men of virtue"; and Wordsworth writes:

> I've heard of hearts unkind, kind deeds
> With coldness still returning;
> Alas! the gratitude of men
> Hath oftener left me mourning.

How often Jesus Christ was surprised and cheered by the unexpected goodness of men.

But when we turn from individual life to the social life of the so-called Christian world, our conscience is disturbed by a new challenge. We cannot throw back on God the responsibility for evils that are the outcome of human neglect and selfishness. We Christian men and women could have made this world a far better training-ground for human virtue if our belief in the Kingdom of God had been transformed from passive acquiescence to passionate enthusiasm. When we are charged with overvaluation of material things, with lack of the imaginative sympathy that can not only relieve, but also understand, the wants of others, with neglect of the duties of citizenship, we must bow our heads and confess that in all these things

we have left undone those things that we ought to have done.

2. The idea of the Kingdom, or Sovereignty, of God saves us from the dualism that sets up a kingdom of darkness side by side with the kingdom of light in the world of spiritual reality. The sovereignty of God is not a limited monarchy restrained in its activities by an organised "Opposition." Christianity took over from later Jewish thought the idea of a Satanic kingdom, ruled by a fallen archangel. Our Lord accepted this, as He accepted much else in the symbolism of contemporary Jewish teaching, because it represented a spiritual truth, but He gave no warrant for the mythology that peopled the upper air with fiends and the "lower parts of the earth" with the products of the devil's victorious activity. But if we say that Satan is a personification of the tendency to reversion that belongs to the moral order as well as to the realm of nature, we are not denying the fact of evil; we are only denying that it has any place in the realm of spiritual reality. We are obliged to personify ideas to make them intelligible. We cannot escape from the need of speaking about Nature as personal, though we know that we are only using a metaphor. Britannia with her trident is the symbolic expression of the complicated series of facts that make up the British Empire.

Evil remains no less and no more real—temptation

not less a fact of experience—if we no longer clothe these in the guise of a personal devil. Sin is negation —impaired vitality—and therefore, in its measure, death. But the Kingdom of God is a positive conception. It represents the victory of reality over illusion, of affirmation over negation, of life over death.

Yet we do not refuse to admit that disincarnate spirits devoid of moral character may exist in the spiritual universe, and may gain control over human minds and wills. The phenomena of possession has not yet been investigated with sufficient care, and it may be that the stories of demon-possession in the gospels will present less difficulty to the psychology of the future than they did a little while ago. It is significant that the demons are represented as recognising their impotence when confronted with Jesus Christ. We are traversing a mysterious region, where it is easy to indulge in fantastic imaginings. I have sometimes thought that demons may be the waste products of a process of spiritual evolution, passing out of the sphere of conscious life—melted down, as it were, to be recoined in the currency of the Kingdom of God.

And what of the angels? Are we to think of them as symbolic expressions of the Providence of God that watches over human lives, or as real beings—"ministering spirits, sent forth to do service for them who shall be the heirs of salvation"?[1]

[1] Heb. i. 14.

Do they belong to the poetry of religion or to its theology? If there is a Kingdom of God in heaven, there must be subjects in that Kingdom over whom the sovereignty of God is exercised, who "do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word." In the beautiful collect for All Angels' Day we declare that God has "ordained and constituted the services of angels and men in a wonderful order." It is inherently improbable that man is the only intelligent being in the spiritual universe, with whom God can share His gladness. And if there are other intelligences sharing in the service of the Kingdom, there is nothing irrational in the belief that the drama of human redemption has an interest for them. We cannot demand belief in the angels as an essential part of Christian theology, but I think our conception of the Kingdom of God is enriched when we think of it as a great hierarchy of service where "with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify Thy glorious name."

3. The conception of the Kingdom of God commits us to the belief in an absolute moral standard.[1] A vague kind of relativity has invaded contemporary thought. The old frontier lines between truth and

[1] We cannot be sure that the formula with which the author of the first gospel introduced many of the parables—"The kingdom of heaven is like"—was actually used by our Lord. If it were so we must recognise that He sometimes used the phrase as equivalent to "The Christian Dispensation," in which good and evil are mixed together.

untruth, between right and wrong, have become blurred and obscure. The old saw, "one man's meat is another man's poison," has become "one man's right is another man's wrong." If this means that what is excusable in one man is inexcusable in another, it may be accepted, for we cannot believe that Divine justice is less willing than human justice to admit extenuating circumstances. But Divine sovereignty means an absolute moral standard. To the old question whether goodness is good because God wills it or God wills it because it is good, I suppose the answer is that goodness is that quality of being that alone can maintain a spiritual universe of reality. If God wills a spiritual universe, He must will that there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth. There is room in the Kingdom of God for many grades of service—"one star differeth from another star in glory"—but there is no room for a will that is not in tune with the will of God. "Children," said Jesus to His disciples, "how hard it is to enter into the Kingdom of God"—so hard that only the grace of God, reaching down to us in Christ, can lift us into the Kingdom. A place in that Kingdom is not a human achievement, but a Divine gift. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

4. There is another aspect from which we may regard the Kingdom of God. St. Mark reports our Lord as speaking of "the mystery of the

Kingdom of God," and the phrase suggests a comparison between the Kingdom as represented in His teaching and the Mystery religions which are sometimes (though I think quite erroneously) supposed to have influenced St. Paul's teaching. Dr. Scullard puts this matter very clearly. "The contrasts between the religion of Jesus, the perfect type of Mystery religion, and the others are very marked. The heathen cults, for example, were not purely monotheistic. They were mythological, rather than based on historical facts. They moved also in a naturalistic, rather than an ethical sphere. They appealed to the emotions rather than to the conscience, and surrounded their initiates with the artificial atmosphere of the drama, not with the realities of the spiritual world. They exaggerated the value of ritual in religion, whereas Jesus taught a religion singularly free from forms and ceremonies —a worship of the Father in spirit and in truth. And yet, in spite of these and other differences, there were general features in common, of which three may be especially mentioned. The Mystery religions were esoteric in character (that is, they were open only to initiates). They were spiritual brotherhoods, and they were very specially religions of redemption." [1] Here are three notes of the Kingdom that are conspicuous in the New Testament. (1) Its meaning is only known to those who are within. "The natural man receiveth

[1] Dr. Scullard: *The Ethics of the Gospel*, p. 38.

not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; and he cannot know them because they are spiritually judged." To enter the Kingdom of God is an adventure, or, as the Bible would call it, an act of faith—a " proving of things unseen." (2) The Kingdom of God is a brotherhood, a society of subjects who are also sons in the kingdom of their Father. (3) The Kingdom of God is a way of redemption. As we sing in the *Te Deum*, " When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of heaven to all believers." It was through the sacrificial death of the first subject of the Kingdom that the door into it was opened to those who identified themselves with the offering made on their behalf (not, in their stead).

Scholars have in recent years been considering the relation of Christianity to the Mystery religions. In reality it was not unlike its relation to the Jewish sacrificial system. Both were expressions of deep human needs that were met in the offering of perfect obedience that inaugurated the Kingdom of God. In the Mystery religions, as in the Jewish sacrificial system, the ceremony of initiation was associated with the sprinkling of blood, which symbolised the communication to the initiate of a new life that belonged to a higher order. So Jesus said to Nicodemus, " Except a man be born again [or, from above] he cannot see the Kingdom of God." [1]

[1] St. John iii. 3.

And when He gave the cup to His disciples at the Last Supper saying, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many," he added, according to St. Mark's Gospel, "I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until the day when I drink it new with you in the Kingdom of God." [1] What He meant by those mysterious words we cannot perhaps altogether understand, but what is significant is the association of the thought of the blood of the covenant with the promise of the Kingdom.

[1] St. Mark xiv. 25.

CHAPTER VII

THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

IS there a social gospel? Perhaps it would be more correct to speak of the social aspect of the Gospel—for there is only one gospel, the gospel of the grace of God; the gospel that assures us that God cares for every man, and has sent him to school in this world that he may be trained for his place in the Kingdom of God.

> He fixed thee mid this dance
> Of plastic circumstance,
> This present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest;
> Machinery just meant
> To give thy soul its bent,
> Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.[1]

The world was not made to be a playground where men may enjoy themselves, nor a jungle where they may fight, but a factory for the making of souls. If we were sure that the world was what God meant it to be, we might be content to sing with Pippa, "God's in His heaven, all's right with the world." But a growing conviction has awakened among Christian men that the world is not what God meant it to be. So far had human society fallen short of the Divine ideal in the days before Christ that men who had caught the Spirit of Jesus

[1] Browning: *Rabbi Ben Ezra.*

hardly recognised it as God's world at all. "The whole world lieth in the evil one." Only blind prejudice can deny that centuries of Christian influence have raised the standards of conduct among the European nations, yet they are still far below the level of Christian morality. But the evils that menace and degrade human life are not inevitable, they are the outcome of human ignorance and of human sin. The cure for ignorance is education—the right kind of education; and the cure for sin is salvation; and Jesus Christ is both the Teacher and the Saviour of men.

One of the noblest chapters of human history is the chapter that tells of the fight against disease, carried on with self-sacrificing devotion by a great army of workers. If the war against social disease had been waged with the same energy, how much nobler life might be. Why has not this been the case? For two reasons. First because selfishness is a much more subtle disease than cholera or phthisis. It can only be cured by an inner transformation so radical as to be a "new birth." No change in the structure of society will prevent self-interest from being the strongest motive for action; only a "new heart and a right spirit" can heal the disease of the social order. Then, secondly, because men have surrendered the control over the institutions that civilisation has created around them. They have accepted with patience, tempered by occasional outbreaks of rebellion,

the social order in which they find themselves entangled.

The spread of democracy in the modern world has helped to arouse a new consciousness of responsibility. Though, in England specially, we carry on the congenial habit of blaming the Government, we know that, within limits that must be learned by experience, our world is ours to make. In the early days of Christianity, the only duty that could be enjoined on the private citizen was that of obedience to the powers that be, and proper regard for honesty and straight-dealing in business life. But to-day the private citizen finds himself swept into the cross-currents of a complicated world, where his actions affect the lives of his fellow-men in a bewildering variety of ways. I cannot change from Indian to China tea without altering, in an infinitesimal degree, the course of international exchange. So we are coming to see that there is no escape from moral responsibility. Every man is, in his measure, responsible for the welfare of all men.

We have neither the knowledge, nor the moral courage, to face this responsibility alone. We must draw together in a Society for the Welfare of Mankind—or join the existing society that exists for that end, and is called the Christian Church. In relation to the social order the function of the Christian Church is twofold. Its first task must be to awaken in its members a " pain in the

mind," like the pain in the mind of Jesus when He had compassion on men who were hungry or sick or ignorant. The first challenge of a world that has lost its way is "Do you care?" A great passion for social righteousness, a great sympathy for the "under-dog," ought to be characteristic of the followers of Jesus Christ. Then the Church must set itself to study the problem of how to apply the moral principles of Christianity to all human relationships. It is no part of the work of the Church to draw up political programmes, or organise itself into a political party. The fact that we are Christian men and women gives us no right to suppose that we can teach statesmanship to our statesmen and political economy to our economists, and business management to our leaders of industry. What we can do is to put behind all efforts for human welfare the force of an educated Christian public opinion. Such an organised public opinion will be of value in proportion as it is constructive. We clergy are constantly attacked because we do not denounce this or that social evil. But denunciation is often little more than a subtle form of self-indulgence. "It is better to fight for the good than to rail at the ill"—better and far more Christian.

The "acid test" by which Christianity will be judged in the near future is its attitude towards war, for war has been stripped of its glamour, and is recognised now as the greatest enemy of

human progress. Unquestionably, another great war would mean the suicide of civilisation. War is the most directly anti-Christian form of human activity, because it is an appeal from justice to force—from the law of the man to the law of the brute. But, it may be answered, does not the State rest on force? No, the State rests on justice, and it demands of the private citizen that he should refrain from the use of force for redressing his wrongs, and appeal instead to the justice of an impartial tribunal. A State only begins to be civilised when the basis of its appeal is not force, but justice. Why should it seem impossible to carry the same principle into the sphere of international relationships? By what right does every State claim to be the sole judge of its own rights? That is a question that the Christian conscience is bound to ask. We have set up a League of Nations, and a Court of Arbitral Justice, and both of these represent an attempt to substitute justice for force as the basis of international relationships. But unless they are supported by the moral influence of Christian public opinion, they will not be strong enough to cope with those fits of madness to which nations are subject. It is a great gain that machinery should exist by which effect can be given to the saner instincts of mankind, but no machinery can save us unless it has the spirit of goodwill and mutual loyalty as a driving force. Can Christianity exorcise the evil spirits of greed and hatred and fear

that poison international relations, and implant in their place ideals of service and mutual respect and trust ?

The number of people who believe in war as a solution of international problems is fortunately few. The chief argument that advocates of peace have to meet is summed up in the statement, " You cannot change human nature." As addressed to a society whose *raison d'être* is to change human nature, this argument is not very convincing. It is true that the ape and the tiger—not to speak of the donkey—lie dormant rather than dead in human nature. But most men have learned to curb the instincts of the jungle, except when they surrender their sense of personal responsibility under the spell of the herd-instinct. Men in groups or masses are capable of acts of cruelty and injustice of which they would be incapable as individuals. This is partly due to a lack of moral courage, and partly due to the fact that nations and political parties and other organised societies exist, or think that they exist, for secular rather than for religious ends. One of the greatest tasks that lie before the Christian Church is the proclamation of the truth that " nations are in every respect accountable to the same moral judgment bar to which individuals are accountable." The action of a community should be more unselfish, more chivalrous, than that of the individuals that compose it, for it is his best, not his worst, self that every

man ought to bring to the co-operative life for which he was made. The Christian man does not best serve the cause of Christ by detaching himself from all the organised forms of collective activity that belong to modern life, but by carrying into them all the spirit of sacrificial service to which he is pledged as the disciple of Jesus. Taking up the cross means running risks for Christ's sake. The difficulty lies in the fact that he has to live and act in a social order that is only partly Christian. But we should despair of mankind if we did not believe that they are capable of responding to the appeal of high ideals. Even in addressing a non-Christian audience, we need not be content to " put the matter on its lowest grounds." Increasingly, modern life finds expression in corporate activity; and unless Christianity can consecrate these corporate activities, it must inevitably count for less and less as an effective force in human life.

Closely akin to the problem of war is the problem of interracial relationships. The tendency to regard the " lower " races as existing to serve the interests of the " higher " has been responsible for some of the worst crimes of history, from the slavery of the Roman Empire to the horrors of Putumayo and the Congo. The change that is coming over human thought is partly due to a stronger moral impulse, and partly to the refusal of the " coloured " races to accept any longer a position of inferiority. The civilisation of Western Europe has not been

so conspicuously successful that we can be content to impose it on races that have their own contribution to make to the life of humanity. Christianity is committed to the doctrine of the equal value before God of all His children, and can make no terms with the exploitation of the "inferior" races. In the Mandate system, the League of Nations has tried to give expression to this new sense of trusteeship, but only ceaseless vigilance will prevent men and nations from misusing their power. It is our worst, as well as our best, that we have offered to the peoples of the world, and arms and alcohol have gone out in the same ships that carried Bibles and the machinery of civilised life. Christian missions have been resented on the ground that they "took the native out of his place." Against all this the conscience of the civilised world has begun to protest, and behind that protest the Church must put the whole force of Christian public opinion.

Meanwhile, civilised life is confronted with problems that baffle the statesman and the philanthropist. When men ask what is the Christian message to the world of industry, we are not yet ready with an answer. Many Christian men are prepared to answer that there is no message at all—that it is no part of the task of Christianity to afford guidance in "secular" matters, which are governed by unalterable economic laws. To some of us this seems an intolerable contention.

If human lives are crippled and embittered by industrial conditions, He Who is the Lord of all life cannot be indifferent. But if we are to give any effective message, we must go back to first principles, and not be content with a merely empirical patching up of the social structure, and the amelioration of its most flagrant evils. What do we need ?

1. We need a new view of the value of personality. Man was not made to be a mere cog in the industrial machine, with no real share of responsibility for the industry in which he is engaged.[1] Much of the work that has to be done in modern life is necessarily dull, mechanical and monotonous. We must claim for every man three things. First, adequate remuneration. No industry that cannot pay its workers a living wage has any right to exist —and by a living wage we do not mean a wage sufficient for the bare necessities of existence, but a wage that shall give an adequate margin for those comforts and conveniences that we regard as essential for ourselves. It is here that the responsibility of the consumer comes in. Beyond

1 Our life is turned
Out of her course, wherever man is made
An offspring, or a sacrifice, a tool
Or implement, a passive Thing employed
As a brute mean, without acknowledgment
Of common right, or interest in the end :
Used or abused, as selfishment may prompt.
Wordsworth : *The Excursion.*

a certain point, cheapness can only mean the exploitation of the worker, and a refusal to buy "sweated" goods is an elementary Christian duty. Second, adequate leisure for the recreation of those faculties that cannot find scope in the factory and the workshop. It is not in any spirit of narrow sabbatarianism that we Christians contend for the maintenance of Sunday as a day when men may possess their souls again. The whole question of the right use of leisure needs much more careful thought than it has yet received. A man's moral character is tested and trained by the way in which he uses that part of his life that lies within his own control. It is no part of the work of the Church to provide amusements for the people, but Christian public opinion is bound to see that leisure is not exploited for the degradation rather than the enrichment of character. We shall do this most effectively, not by denouncing the book-maker, and the public-house and the dancing saloon, but by supporting actively every effort to cater for the leisure of the people on clean and healthy lines. The State may feel obliged, in the interest of the community, to suppress activities that are injurious to public welfare, but it must always do so with great reluctance, for self-determination is too valuable a thing to be lightly restricted.

Thirdly, such security of tenure as is possible. Insecurity is one of the most harassing features of modern industry, yet the problem of unemploy-

ment is the most complex of all the problems of industry. Unemployment insurance—what in England is wrongly called the "dole"—may do something to mitigate the hardships of unemployment, but it does not prevent the deterioration of character that enforced idleness almost inevitably brings. The Christian Church has no panacea to offer, but Christian public opinion must keep the urgency of the problem constantly before the minds of statesmen and leaders of industry.

The problem of unemployment illustrates the way in which the structure of economic life rests on a spiritual basis. Regularity of employment depends on stability of demand—that is, on consumption. Now there are two things that render consumption unstable. The first of these is an over-large demand for luxuries, for luxury trades are liable to greater fluctuations than trades that cater for more necessary demands. Expenditure on luxuries may be "good for trade," but a steady demand for boots is a much better guarantee against unemployment than a fluctuating demand for diamond brooches or painted vases. The other is the lack of confidence that leads to restriction of output by the producer and restriction of demand by the consumer. If we could all agree to consume more—of the right things—we should all be better off. It follows from this that a more equal distribution of wealth, and the growth of a stronger spirit of confidence, would give more

stable employment in industry. In the case of Great Britain, the whole matter is complicated by the degree to which we are dependent on world-markets; but there is no doubt that the wave of prosperity that is sweeping over America is due to just these things—the wide diffusion of material wealth, and the spirit of confidence.

Adequate wages, reasonable leisure and security of employment are necessary conditions for industrial well-being, but I think we ought to add a fourth aim to our list. The argument for democracy as a system of government is not that it makes for the greatest immediate efficiency—it doesn't—but because it educates the citizen by developing his sense of responsibility. The same principle holds good in industrial life. A worker is much more likely to "put his heart into his job" if he has some voice in the conduct of the industry in which he is investing his life. It must be admitted that there are great difficulties in the way of the application of this principle. Modern industry has become an expert business, in which inefficiency is punished by decline and fall. But a good many business men have already discovered that the goodwill that is promoted by taking the workers into their confidence is a real asset. The system of industrial organisation that gathers employers and workers into organised armies of mutual distrust, with the shareholders as an impotent *tertium quid* in the background,

is about as un-Christian as any human system could be.

2. We need to develop the sense of vocation—to recognise that vocation is not limited to Holy Orders, or specially religious kinds of life, but that every man is called of God to his appointed work. The value of the much-misunderstood clause of the Anglican Church Catechism—"To do my duty in that state of life unto which it shall please God to call me"—is that it puts the idea of a Divine vocation behind all human life. Few men, comparatively, are free to choose their life-work. Some careers, like that of the coal miner, are practically hereditary, others are dictated by what often seem accidental circumstances. But if a man can accept his work, whatever it may be, as a vocation, a means whereby he can serve God in serving the community, he will be able to keep his self-respect and sense of responsibility. "All service ranks the same with God." The discipline that the mediæval monk found in the knotted cord and the hair-shirt, the worker of to-day may find in the machinery of the workshop :

> Room to deny ourselves, a road
> To lead us daily nearer God.

The idea of life as vocation does not rule out legitimate ambition, but it does rule out the bitterness that resents the prosperity of others, and the

snobbery that estimates the worth of a man by the kind of work that he does.

3. We need to think rightly about work—to teach that every man is bound to give back in service to the community at least the equivalent of what he has received, and, equally, that the community is bound to see that the opportunity of a reasonable life is offered to every man who serves the nation in any capacity. Yet there is a real danger that security may come to count for more than adventure. A man who is educated, clothed, housed, fed and set to work by the community will never develop a high type of personal character. We may help to avert this danger by encouraging every kind of voluntary organisation through which men may give expression to their social instincts. The mediæval Gilds were fostered and encouraged by the Church, and the same encouragement might be given by the Church to-day to Co-operative Societies, Friendly Societies and Trade Unions—though these last have largely lost their voluntary character. The Church itself is the greatest voluntary organisation within the State, and it must not barter its independence in return for any material advantages.

4. We need a more Christian attitude towards wealth and poverty. Jesus Christ regarded wealth as a burden rather than a blessing. But the poverty that He commended was not the grinding poverty that haunts the slums of our modern cities. " We

shall never," says Miss Underhill, "get spiritual values out of a society harried and tormented by economic pressure, or men and women whose whole attention is given to the daily task of keeping alive." When every allowance is made for improvidence, and for the work-shyness of a relatively small section of people who have lost their self-respect, the conscience of every Christian man ought to be troubled at the realisation of how large a body of honest people in modern Europe live habitually within a week or two of actual destitution. Though patience and kindliness flourish in this unpromising soil, and even squalor and destitution cannot stifle the unconquerable soul when it is touched by the hand of God, it is hard to preach the gospel of the grace of God to men and women who know so little of the grace of man. Is it not true that we must give men and women the chance of being human before we can make them Christian ?

Poverty becomes harder to bear when it is confronted by the extravagant standards of life in which a favoured few are able to indulge. Will the Christianity of to-morrow have the courage to revise its standard of values, so as to bring them into conformity with those of Jesus ? There is, I suppose, no Church in Christendom to-day that does not overvalue material wealth—no Church to which St. James's impeachment does not apply, to some extent at least. Is there any Church that dares to be poor, deliberately poor,

in order to be free from dependence on the support of the well-to-do? The Salvation Army has shown how a great organisation that is not afraid of poverty may carry on its work on the willing offerings of the poor. The Orthodox Eastern Church has the same apostolic poverty, and its secular clergy share the hard conditions of life in which their people live. In the Churches of the West, a modest competence is regarded as the natural right of the minister, and the real poverty in which many of them live is disguised by their efforts to maintain, outwardly, the standard of life that is traditionally expected of them. The maintenance of our Church organisations involves financial demands that are increasingly hard to meet, and time and thought that ought to be devoted to teaching and prayer are taken up with the raising of funds. I am not dealing now with this problem as it affects the internal life of our Churches, I am only pointing out how it tends to encourage the same overestimate of material possessions as a passport to respect and consideration that we condemn in the secular world.

What can we do? Well, first, we can insist on the Christian principle of equality within the Christian Church. "It does not matter how poor the Moslem is, he is the social equal of all others; prince and peasant, black and brown, will worship side by side in the Mosque without anyone making the slightest objection." There is more of this

spirit of brotherhood in the Roman Church than in the Churches of Northern Europe, where the influence of feudalism, with its static idea of human relationships, still persists.

Then we can teach the doctrine of trusteeship. We often speak of the duty of giving a certain proportion of our wealth to God, but this is not the Christian conception. All that we have belongs to God already. We are stewards of His property, charged to administer it for Him. We are permitted to use a part for our own maintenance, the rest we are to expend for the welfare of His children and the promotion of His Kingdom.

It is no part of the business of the Christian Church to set on foot schemes of social reform or industrial reorganisation. Every nation will have to solve its social and industrial problems in its own way, and the teaching of experience will count for more than doctrinaire theories. It may ultimately be recognised that forms of organisation matter much less than the spirit that lies behind them. The right motive may, in the end, prove more important than the right method, for the best-designed organisation will not make for human well-being if the dynamic force behind it is compounded of greed, hatred and envy. No Christian man can identify himself with the doctrines of Karl Marx and Lenin, and it is the predominance of these doctrines in continental Socialism that has given to it an anti-religious character

that is, fortunately, not present in the Labour movement in Great Britain and America. The disinherited classes may have ground for indignation, but in international and in industrial affairs we must not allow the wrongs of the past to embitter the hopes of the future. Yet Christianity does not exist to preach contentment to the poor, and a legitimate acquisitiveness to the well-to-do, but to tell all men that great possessions may hinder a man from entering into the Kingdom of God, whose gates are open to the poor. And the best things in life are the things that we can share together :

> The sun is fixed,
> And the infinite magnificence of heaven
> Fixed, within reach of every human eye ;
> The sleepless ocean murmurs for all ears ;
> The vernal field infuses fresh delight
> Into all hearts.
> Gifts nobler are vouchsafed alike to all ;
> Reason, and with that reason smiles and tears ;
> Imagination, freedom of the will ;
> Conscience to guide and check, and death to be
> Forecasted, immortality conceived
> By all—a blissful immortality,
> To them whose holiness on earth shall make
> The spirit capable of heaven, assured.
>
> The primal duties shine aloft—like stars ;
> The charities that soothe and heal and bless
> Are scattered at the feet of Man—like flowers.
> The generous inclination, the just rule,
> Kind wishes and good actions and pure thoughts—
> No mystery is here ! Here is no boon

> For high—yet not for low ; for proudly graced—
> Yet not for meek of heart. The smoke ascends
> To heaven as lightly from the cottage hearth
> As from the haughtiest palace. He, whose soul
> Ponders this true equality, may walk
> The fields of earth with gratitude and hope.

I make no apology for the length of this quotation from Wordsworth's *Excursion*, because it shows how a right estimate of values can ennoble our outlook on life, and deliver us from the fate of the man with the muckrake who " could look no way but downwards."

The most important fact in social life is education, for education means the development in men of those faculties that make for social well-being. One of the most conspicuous changes of the last hundred years has been the wide extension and the secularisation of education. High hopes were entertained of what education might achieve when emancipated from ecclesiastical control. It cannot be said that these hopes have been fulfilled.

" The boom in education has not brought any nobler literature, any greater art, any purer drama, any finer manners. . . . The result of this chaos in spiritual and moral training is a manifest loosening of the canons of moral life, the slackness of discipline, worst of all the sacrifice of the family as a moral institution and the degradation of marriage to be a temporary partnership, entered upon as a frivolous mode of getting a good time and to

be cast off as easily as a lodging which is not convenient."

This verdict of Mr. Frederick Harrison, the leader of English Positivism, represents the opinion of many thoughtful observers of contemporary life. Why has education failed to do all that men hoped ? The answer is that it has set before itself an inadequate ideal, and has aimed at the acquisition of knowledge rather than at the enrichment of life. It has been hag-ridden by examinations, which, at best, are a necessary evil, and may easily become a disastrous hindrance to real education. The County Council of the West Riding of Yorkshire, in the introduction to a syllabus of Religious Instruction, expresses very clearly the real weakness of modern education :

" Since education is designed to stimulate and develop every side of our complex nature, no education can be complete which omits religion. For religion has through all the history of our race accessible to us been always and everywhere one of its deepest instincts. . . . For the whole outlook on life, for inward harmony, for a just estimate of the worth of personality, for mastery over the world, the realisation of the Unseen and the consciousness of fellowship with it have proved of incomparable value. An education, therefore, which leaves this instinct without acknowledgment must be defective, starving the child on a most important side of his nature. If he is well developed

in body and mind, but stunted in his religious nature, he cannot be regarded as fully educated."

"Knowledge," say modern advocates of education, "is power." Yes, but power is dangerous unless it is accompanied by self-control and a sense of moral responsibility. Truth, beauty and goodness are the three guiding stars of human life, and true education means knowledge of truth, admiration of beauty and love for goodness.

> We live by Admiration, Hope and Love,
> And, even as these are well and wisely fixed,
> In dignity of being we ascend.[1]

It is obvious, then, that any attempt to separate education from religion can only mean the impoverishment of both. One of the great tasks of the Christianity of to-morrow must be to repair the blunder that has put asunder what God has joined together. The difficulty of the task is obvious. The Church has tried to maintain educational institutions side by side with those of the State, and also to supplement state education with such teaching as it could give within its own borders. But we cannot regard this as adequate. For secular education is not merely non-religious, it is inevitably anti-religious, in that it rules out, as unimportant, the deepest facts of human life.

[1] Wordsworth: *The Excursion.*

Even a half-hour of Bible teaching at the beginning of the day does not fully meet the need, for religion means an attitude towards the ultimate realities that must colour all our teaching. Without reverence, life cannot be noble; without service, it cannot be unselfish; without duty, it cannot be free; without comradeship, it cannot be human.

A united Church could secure a religious education for every child in the civilised world, but our denominational separations leave us impotent. If it were not for the work of the Student Christian Movement, University life would, generally speaking, be devoid of religious influence, and secondary education throughout Europe gives a very subordinate place to the things of the spirit.

While asserting the place of religion in all education, the Church cannot surrender its own specific work, for the teaching office of the Church is an essential part of its commission. Few things are more urgently needed than a much higher standard of teaching in all the Churches. Emotional appeals and moral platitudes are an inadequate substitute for definite teaching of the Christian Faith, which is the greatest work of the Christian minister. The ignorance of many of our people as to the meaning of Christianity is the measure of our failure.

But this specifically Christian teaching cannot succeed if it is superimposed on a secular system of education that leaves the spiritual side of life

starved and stunted. Here a wide field for fruitful co-operation between Church and State lies open to us. The heart of the problem is the selection and training of teachers. No State regulations or educational syllabuses can guarantee an adequate education unless those who teach are inspired with a high ideal. The work of the teacher must be regarded, not as a means of livelihood, but as a vocation of high honour and great responsibility. The Church must abandon all attempts to control education, and must choose instead the more difficult but perhaps nobler task of guidance and encouragement. In this, as in many other things, we need to recognise that "he that is not against us is on our part," and learn not to antagonise those who are suspicious of ecclesiastical interference, and yet are alive to the need of a wider and more adequate educational ideal.

Education brings us to the home, and for the sanctity of home life Christianity must, if need be, stake its very life. For the family is the one social unit within which the great Christian principle that the strong must bear the infirmities of the weak finds its fullest expression. Post-war conditions have struck heavy blows at family life. They have accentuated the housing problem, and created an atmosphere of insecurity and restlessness that tends to break up the life of the family. Communism attacks the family in the supposed interest of the State, and the growing laxity of

the marriage bond brings with it childless marriages and sexual licence. Yet the family is too deeply rooted in human life to be easily destroyed. Christianity has "great allies" in its championship of home life as the only true foundation for a worthy social order. Like all the best things of life, the family may deteriorate if it becomes a detached and self-regarding unit, and only religion firmly planted in the home can protect it against this danger. Christian baptism is a witness to the fact that the Church is an extension of the family, a fellowship of families rather than merely of detached individuals. And the greatest argument for parochial visiting is that it helps to bring religion into relation with the home life of the people. The development of paternal legislation in the modern state, however necessary it may have been, has tended to disintegrate family relationships, and to weaken the bond of mutual service that holds family life together. The service of the Kingdom may demand the sacrifice of family ties—"He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me"—yet Jesus denounced with scathing emphasis the spirit that used pretended dedication as an excuse for neglecting parental claims. For Christian service finds its earliest channel of exercise in home life, and in the continuous life of the family the spiritual inheritance of the past is carried forward as an enrichment into the life of the future.

NOTE

The report of the C.O.P.E.C. Commission on Industry and Property summarised the most conspicuous evils of our present industrial system as follows :

1. An appalling amount of damage to physical life through lack of necessaries, vitiated conditions, occupations dangerous to life, limb or health, and other causes.

2. A lamentable absence of freedom to develop one's own interest, power and personality and choose the conditions in which they shall be expressed.

3. The banishing of beauty, conspicuously from our towns, but also from large tracts of the countryside, and from the common things of use.

4. The prevalance of hostility, mistrust and strife, poisoning human relations. It is true that no order of industry would of itself eliminate jealousies, envies, bickerings and conflict, but it cannot be denied that exciting conditions tend to foster and inflame them.

5. Economic strife between nations, issuing from time to time in war, by which the good results of civilisations are in some cases destroyed and the bad features enormously accentuated.

CHAPTER VIII

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

I HAVE said something in the last chapter about the relation of Christianity to education, but the whole future of Christianity is so intimately involved in the Christian ideal of education that it seems necessary to devote a chapter to the subject. There are several signs that modern education is beginning to move in a direction that will bring it much more nearly into harmony with the Christian ideal. There is a widespread feeling that while we have devoted much time and thought to the improvement of the machinery of education, we have not thought out clearly enough its meaning and purpose. Our educational ideals have been confused and inadequate, and we have failed to evoke in this country the enthusiasm for education that has been a characteristic feature of Scottish life, and has awakened into vigorous activity in America.[1] But there are hopeful indications of improvement.

[1] It is claimed by Americans that by their system of free, public and common schools they have demonstrated their belief in education as a part of national life, gone far to provide equality of opportunity for the people, brought all classes together in a common pursuit of knowledge, raised the whole level of intelligence and self-respect and bred a contagious enthusiasm for education. They have also made possible a high degree of unity and continuity.—C.O.P.E.C. Report, p. 55.

1. We may note first the clearer recognition that true education must be, in a wide sense, religious—that is, it must deal with the ultimate issues and spiritual values of life. No educationalist is now willing to accept the mere acquisition of knowledge as the chief aim of education. At every stage it must be related to some purpose, consciously present in the mind of the teacher, and gradually recognised by the child. Children forget rapidly unless interest is aroused, and this can only be done by associating knowledge with some purpose —even if it be only personal advancement. If we want to find some nobler purpose than this, we are obliged to call religion to our aid. In yet another way education is moving in a religious direction. It is being generally recognised that the best results can only be achieved when all knowledge is treated, not as a series of unrelated subjects, but as a unity. At the beginning of the educational process the child is the unit, but if education is to escape the danger of being a disintegrating influence there must be a unifying principle at the end that holds all knowledge together, and the only unifying principle large enough to serve our purpose is a religious one.

" True education will not be a medley of items, or a series of disconnected movements, but a coherent advance. It is the great function of religion to develop this unity, and in doing so to transform

all the heterogeneous details of instruction into a true preparation for life." [1]

There is no escape from Newman's dictum, "The apprehension of the Unseen is the only known principle of subduing evil, educating the multitude and organising society."

"The individual is in touch not only with nature and society but also with the invisible but real world of truth, beauty and goodness. In proportion as he is able to apprehend and participate in this world, he acquires an independence over against both nature and society. It is his contact with this spiritual world which enables him to contribute to the progress and reformation of society."

"The distinctive characteristic of religion is that it views all interests and activities from the standpoint of the whole. It is concerned with the ultimate meaning of life. Hence, if the central purpose of education is to foster the growth of persons, the greatest service it can render to them is to enable them to find some ultimate meaning in their lives, so that life may become unified through dedication to a controlling purpose. Education is thus compelled to be religious in its outlook and in its aims." [2]

2. Not less hopeful, from the Christian point of view, is the recognition of the development of personality as the supreme purpose of education.

[1] C.O.P.E.C. Report, p. 54.

[2] Jerusalem Conference Report, vol. ii, pp. 35 and 39.

" Modern education makes the child the starting point of the educational process. The older education was material-centred. It set out with a more or less fixed body of knowledge which had to be transmitted. Its course was determined by the logical arrangement of the subject to be taught. Teachers now realise that the needs of the pupil, his problems, his interests and the situations with which he is familiar are of primary importance in determining the course to be followed." [1]

" The only goal we can accept," says Professor Kilpatrick, " is one that values personality." The goal of all true education is a fully integrated personality that finds expression in clear thinking, right feeling and effective action, and is able to secure a true adjustment to the world of nature, to the social order and to the ultimate realities or values of the spiritual world.

3. It follows from this that education is essentially social, for personality cannot develop in isolation. It is social in method, for it recognises the group as an essential element in education. A solitary student may acquire knowledge, but his " need of a world of men " remains unsatisfied. " The best teaching is in the spirit of fellowship. Intelligence, initiative, responsibility and other like qualities which education seeks to develop cannot be acquired by reading or talking about them.

[1] Jerusalem Conference Report, vol. ii, p. 16.

They can be learned only by actual fellowship and participation in the life and activities of a co-operating group." [1]

So, in the words of the C.O.P.E.C. Report, "in adult education intercourse plays a part scarcely as yet recognised, and the mental and spiritual discipline that comes of association for a high purpose is at least as important as the acquisition of book knowledge." [2]

And it is also social in purpose, for its aim is to fit the individual for his place in the social order. For this a rightly integrated personality is at least as important as specialised knowledge. The two great enemies of social well-being are selfishness and ineffectiveness—selfishness, which means a want of right adjustment between the individual and the social order in which he lives, and ineffectiveness, which means a want of the integration which enables the individual to express his whole personality in the spheres of thought, feeling and action.

4. In yet another way, modern education is coming into closer correspondence with Christian ideals. The conception of education less as a means of livelihood than as a means of life has led us to think of it as a lifelong process. He who has ceased to learn has, in a real sense, ceased to live. One of the great aims of educational

[1] Jerusalem Conference Report, vol. ii, p. 35.
[2] C.O.P.E.C. Report, p. 152.

reformers is to fill in the gaps in our educational system so that it may be a continuous process reaching through all stages of life. America is leading the way in the provision of education for adolescents, whose needs, except on the merely technical side, English education has hardly yet begun to meet. Adult education is still in its infancy, though the Workers' Education Association has done something to awaken a demand for it.

I have mentioned these tendencies of modern education because they are hopeful signs of the approximation of educational thought to the Christian ideal. The realisation of personality through a lifelong process of development, in the interchange of service and fellowship, comes very near to the Christian conception of education. Yet Christianity has something to add. In the first place, it claims that spiritual values have "objective validity." Truth and Beauty and Goodness are not, so to speak, in the air; they are realities for which human life exists. "Life may be regarded as unfolding itself in four aspects, Beauty, Truth, Usefulness and Goodness. This means that every one of us is potentially an artist, a philosopher, a worker and a saint. To accept this view means also to accept the ideals underlying it, and we believe that these ideals are in accord with the teaching of the Founder of Christianity." [1] But if ideals are to become effective,

[1] C.O.P.E.C. Report, p. 87.

they must be brought into relation to the facts of experience.

" The contrast and opposition between experience and ideals, between what is and what ought to be, constitute the fundamental problem of education." Christianity offers as the solution of that problem the fact of Jesus Christ, as the perfect picture of a fully integrated personality. In Him the harmony of Beauty, Truth and Goodness is complete, and in His proclamation of the Kingdom of God He offered to men an ideal social order, in which service and fellowship could be fully realised. To believe in Jesus Christ and in the Kingdom of God is to recognise that what ought to be already *is*. The ideal is the actual, and by its progressive response to it, human personality attains to the freedom and fulness for which it was made. Our claim is that only Christianity can set before education an ideal that is able to give unity and significance to all its efforts—" until we all come unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

" Religion is not a distinct technical department or occupation, but rather that which gives unity and meaning to the whole, a dynamic, embracing and inspiring power. Every strong purpose brings some unity, the highest of all purposes will bring the truest unity to deep and varied forces of the soul." [1]

Only second to a true ideal, education needs

[1] C.O.P.E.C. Report, p. 49.

the right atmosphere if it is to be effective. As every teacher knows, the assumptions that lie behind his teaching are at least as important in their influence as the actual instruction that he gives. Children are sensitive to atmosphere, and are easily affected by any taint of insincerity or arrogance or boredom. What is the atmosphere that the Christian teacher needs ?

1. The atmosphere of faith. I do not mean by this merely that faith in the rationality of the universe is the necessary foundation of all knowledge, nor the obvious fact that no teacher ought to be expected, or allowed, to teach what he does not believe. What I mean is the recognition of the spiritual reality that lies behind all knowledge. It is only when reverence is joined with knowledge that " heart and mind, according well, will make one music." The Christian teacher who believes that all knowledge comes from God and leads back to God will think of himself not as leading his children in an adventure into the unknown, but as guiding them into fuller knowledge of the works and ways of their Father in Heaven. Unless the Scripture lesson at the beginning of school has some vital relation to all that follows, the great truth of the unity of all life will be lost, and education will tend to fall into disconnected fragments. Faith is the inner reality that makes knowledge a living whole. *Credo ut intelligam.*

2. The atmosphere of love. It is the very first qualification for a true teacher that he should be able to establish a sympathetic relationship with his pupils. He must not impose his personality on them, but use it as a means of drawing out their own immature personalities. If he cares for them, he will be able to evoke the love that will make the lesson a co-operative effort. Love for knowledge often begins with love for those who have been our earliest teachers, and, on the other hand, an unsympathetic teacher may create a permanent distaste for the subject that he has taught. Our Lord's method of education was to win the affection of those He taught, so that they might bring to the understanding of His teaching the insight that only love can give. *Amo ut intelligam.*

3. The atmosphere of hope. In times of rapid change, such as that in which we are living, the teacher needs constantly to remind himself that his task is not to bind the yoke of tradition on the minds of his children, but to help them to see life steadily and see it whole, so that they may meet with courage and insight the demands of the future. It is the fault of our educational system that so many young people drift aimlessly into adult life, with no purpose except a vague desire to " get on " without too much effort. If the atmosphere of their school life and of their home life is one of hope and encouragement, they will be able to steer a straight course through the dis-

illusionments that adult life brings to us all. It is because Christianity is a religion of hope that it is the best foundation for any true education. The example of Him Who " for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame," is the greatest incentive to moral effort that we can set before our children. If Christianity is true, hope is the key to the interpretation of the enigma of life. *Spero ut intelligam.*

It follows from all that I have said that Christianity is bound to claim for every child the opportunity for the fullest education that it is capable of profiting by. But this does not mean that every child must be driven by the stimulus of examinations and rewards to the point of mental and moral exhaustion. It has recently been stated that " secondary education everywhere seems to suffer from an overtaxing of the capacities of adolescent boyhood and girlhood, so that often ninety per cent. of the pupils cannot follow it with satisfactory results." [1] The result is that many young people leave our secondary schools suffering from " permanent mental and spiritual indigestion." If this is in any measure true, it constitutes a problem that Christian educationalists must face. We must work for a system of secondary education that shall have less regard for a uniform standard, and more regard for developing that " right judgment in all things " for which we pray in our

[1] *Youth and the Church*, p. 75.

Whitsunday collect. And we must watch against the danger of religious teaching being gradually crowded out of public secondary education. There is too much truth in a recent description of the effect of secondary education on young people. "They receive an abundance of science, literature, philosophy, mathematics. They have their eyes dazzled by these very strong lights, and in a little house by the way is a little light which always seems about to be blown out. It is Christianity." [1]

The heart of the whole problem of Christian education is in the secondary school. If we lose the battle there, we lose it all along the line. The problem is twofold. On the one side, as I have tried to show, we must claim for the training of character a much larger place in the programme of secondary education, even, if need be, at the cost of modifying our examination standards. But we must also face the question of how to present Christianity to the adolescent mind. "Religious instruction may be, and often is, one of the worst enemies of the Christian cause among educated youth." This is a hard saying, but can we deny that it is true? The younger generation all over the world is passing through a difficult time. The old safeguards have broken down, the science textbook has taken the glamour of romance out of life—though science may yet restore what it has seemed to destroy. Youth

[1] *Youth and the Church*, p. 75.

to-day is disillusioned and suspicious; it does not want to be "done good to." Yet there is no lack of generous impulses and capacity for response to ideals that ring true. The aim of our religious teaching must be to help the young to discover truth rather than to impose it on them ready-made.

"The purpose of education is to help the pupil to apprehend and realise the highest values of life. That purpose is contradicted when the attempt is made to force him into moulds desired by someone else, or to make him merely a fit instrument for carrying out the purpose of others. It is, unhappily, impossible for even religious teachers to pursue such anti-educational ends. They do so whenever their object is to make proselytes, rather than to foster the growth of independent, free personalities." [1]

Whatever religious instruction is given in secondary schools must be given by the teachers, for only so can it become an integral part of the life of the school. Its effectiveness will be greatly increased if it can find expression in worship and in such forms of practical service as are possible.

What part can the Church play in all this? First, it can offer frank co-operation in place of the suspicion that sometimes exists, and is resented by teachers who feel that they deserve to be encouraged and supported. Its greatest opportunity comes at the end of school life, when the

[1] Jerusalem Conference Report, vol. ii, p. 43.

adolescent boy or girl is passing from the fellowship of the school into adult life. It is not too much to say that the whole future of organised Christianity throughout the world depends on the success of the efforts that are now being made to help youth to find in the Christian Society its spiritual home. Can we persuade older Christians that much that has grown sacred to them from long familiarity may be a hindrance to younger minds trained to a different outlook? Youth is often critical, inconsiderate, over-sensitive. Yet it has great gifts to bring to the Christian cause, if it can feel that the cause is its own. As the outcome of careful inquiry in various parts of Europe and America, Mr. Basil Mathews writes of the young people: "It is not so much that they have rejected Christianity as that they have little, if any, conception of what it really means in itself, or may mean for them and for the world." [1] This is at once the measure of our failure in the past, and the measure of our hope for the future. What youth needs everywhere is a supreme loyalty that shall resolve the conflict of loyalties by which it is bewildered, and create a great fellowship of service that is practical, world-wide and lifelong. Only a Church that can offer them this can hope to regain their allegiance.

In regard to the religious education of the adult, attempts are now being made, with some measure

[1] *Youth and the Church*, p. 23.

of success, to use the Tutorial Class method. Even a small group of adults who have thrashed out the problems of religion together, under competent guidance, would be an asset of real value to Christianity. If the Church is to regain its right place as the Educator of humanity in the things of the Spirit, it must be prepared to encourage frank inquiry rather than unintelligent orthodoxy. For Tertullian's appeal to the soul in his *De Testimonio Animæ* is still valid; it is the echo of St. John's "true Light which, coming into the world, lighteth every man." The enemies that the Church has to fight are, not "honest doubt" (though all doubt is not honest), but the mental indolence that will not face the ultimate problems of life, and the moral indolence that will not translate its belief into action. Christ's message to the first is, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear," and to the second, "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" The ultimate issues of education are moral, and it is because this is coming to be recognised that "the nineteenth century conception of the absolute incompatibility between State education and religion is slowly breaking down."

Yet we must not allow ourselves to speak or think of education as one thing needful for the redemption of humanity. When the Great Educator was preparing His disciples for their work as His messengers, He warned them, in the Parable

of the Sower, against the easy optimism that would end in discouragement. We are not dealing with clay that we can mould after our heart's desire, but with the recalcitrant stuff of human nature. The best that education can do is to teach men to feel their need of the grace of God. "By grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." Christianity asks for the educated mind, but even more it asks for the surrendered will that lays all its knowledge at the feet of Christ,

> That we may lift from out of dust
> A voice as unto him that hears,
> A cry above the conquered years
> To one that with us works, and trust,
>
> With faith that comes of self-control,
> The truths that never can be proved
> Until we close with all we loved,
> And all we flow from, soul in soul.[1]

[1] Tennyson: *In Memoriam.*

CHAPTER IX

THE BELOVED COMMUNITY[1]

IN no department of Christian life does the contrast between the ideal and the actual become so marked as in the case of the Church. When we turn from the glowing pictures of the Christian Church as the Body of Christ, the Bride of the Lamb, the pillar and ground of the truth, the household of God, to the chequered history of the Church and its present condition, we are tempted to plead guilty to the popular charge that the Church has failed. But before we yield to the temptation we must examine the charge more carefully. If it means that we Christian men and women have not been worthy of the Church to

[1] As some readers will recognise, the title of this chapter is derived from Professor Royce's book on *The Problem of Christianity*. Two quotations from this book will serve to show his emphasis on the social significance of Christianity :

"Loyalty, if it comes at all, has the value of a love which does not so much renounce the individual self as devote the self, with all its consciousness and its powers, to an all-embracing unity of individuals in one realm of spiritual harmony. The object of such devotion is, in ideal, the community which is absolutely loveable, because absolutely united, conscious, but above all the distractions of its members."

"All experience must be *at least* individual experience; but unless it is *also* social experience, and unless the whole religious community which is in question share it, this experience is but as sounding brass, and as a tinkling cymbal. This truth St. Paul saw. This is the rock upon which the true and ideal Church is built."

which we belong, and that our mother is discredited by the disloyalty of her children, we cannot deny the charge. Nor can we deny that the Church, as an institution, has failed to adapt its machinery to the needs of modern life, and to preach to men in their own tongue the wonderful works of God. Instead of facing courageously towards the future, we are living too often in a world of memories and controversies that belong to the past. We idealise the Church of the early centuries, or the mediæval Church, or the Reformation period, forgetting the darker side of the picture, and contrast the facts of the present with the fictions of the past. Yet we may dare to assert that the Christian Church is to-day the greatest reservoir of moral effort and unselfish devotion, the Society within which millions of humble men and women have turned from "the heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world," to find solace and strength in the consciousness of God.

What *is* the Church? We must go back to the beginning to find the answer to the question. The Church begins with Jesus Christ. He summed up in Himself all the historic life of the old Israel, as He summed up all the future destiny of the new Israel.[1] He was, we may say, the nucleus of the

[1] Some contemporary theologians tend to emphasise the continuity of the Jewish with the Christian Church, and even deny that Jesus Christ ever intended to found a new Church. There is a truth in this idea of continuity, but we must not exaggerate it. The religious history of Israel began with

Christian Church, and as He drew around Him a little company of men who had learned to love Him and leave all things for His sake, the outlines of the Church began to appear. The Church was the society of men who loved Jesus, and who, through Him, learned to love God and their fellowmen. Men are drawn into fellowship, not by talking about it, or even by trying to achieve it, but by losing themselves in the service of a common cause. So the Church began as a fellowship of a common love. Then it became the fellowship of a common faith and the fellowship of a common hope.

"It is important to emphasise what our Lord did not do. He might have acted like the founder of an Oxford College, have drawn up a body of statutes, appointed certain officials, and thus stereotyped the character of the society. This we recognise to be just what He did not do. He laid down many principles but drafted no rules. He laid the basis of morality on the highest principle, that of love, but gave no other new commandment; the rule of faith was devotion to His person; He formulated no creed; He instituted rites of initiation and communion with no organised ceremonial or fixed doctrine; He established ministry, but gave no order for the appointment of ministers."[1]

Abraham and ended with Jesus Christ. He was Himself, in His own Person, the Omega of the old and the Alpha of the new. But this does not mean that the new was merely the old, with Jesus Christ added to it.

[1] Dr. Headlam: *Bampton Lectures*, p. 44.

Inevitably, organisation followed, and the leadership naturally fell to those who had formed the inner circle of the disciples of Jesus. So the Church started on its long voyage through history, believing that the Spirit of Jesus would guide the great adventure. It gathered a body of literature, in which it incorporated its early experience; it developed a system of government through properly constituted officials; it formulated its creed as need arose. We must not pursue the story; I only want to suggest that the bond of union of the Christian Society was neither a common organisation, nor a common body of articulated doctrine, nor even a common Bible, but something much deeper—a common love, a common faith, a common hope.

The history of the Church is twofold. There is the history that can be, and has been, written—the history of its outer life, its political adventures, its doctrinal controversies, its contact with the world. But there is another history that cannot be written, for its materials lie hidden in the lives of millions of men and women who found the love of Jesus in the fellowship of His Church. Councils might formulate anathemas, Popes might intrigue for power, reformers and counter-reformers might deluge the world with blood, yet all the while men and women were learning to be saints, not by repudiating the teachings of the Church, but by finding in them a schoolmaster to lead them

to Christ. The Church is sacramental, and though on its outward and visible side it often seemed to be tainted with worldliness and torn by dissensions, its inward and spiritual grace still ministered to human need. So the Church lived on, like a ship sometimes almost lost in the trough of the waves, sometimes mounting on their crest, always in danger, yet always guided by an Unseen Hand. "The bush burned with fire and the bush was not consumed."

No human institution can escape from the inheritance of its own past. We cannot repudiate the experience of nineteen centuries and begin again. Yet the Church of to-day is not tied to its own past, the only static thing in a dynamic world. Within the terms of its trust, which find expression in the Catholic creed, it can adapt its methods and machinery to the changing needs of the human society to which it is called to minister. "Belief in the Catholic Church," says Dr. Figgis, "is belief in development." But when we write of changing needs we must remember that the Christian gospel is the Divine provision for those deep, permanent needs of human life that do not change. The Church is a home for the hungry, the heavy-laden, the weak, the sinful—the qualification for admission is not virtue or prosperity, but simply the consciousness of need. "He hath filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away." We sometimes hear

it said that we ought not to join the Church for what we can get, but for what we can give. But this is a one-sided statement. We belong to the Church because we believe that we can serve Jesus Christ better in fellowship than in isolation; but we also belong to the Church because it is the Society through which Divine gifts of healing and strength come down to the life of men. It is often a subtle form of spiritual pride that leads a man to detach himself from the Christian Society that he may receive in isolation the grace that he might share in fellowship, like a sick man in hospital who demands a special ward to himself, or a University undergraduate who claims exemption from hall that he may eat his meals alone.

The Church is a visible society—we might almost say an incarnation of the Spirit of Jesus. "An invisible Church," says Dr. Rashdall, "is a contradiction in terms." The old patristic saying, "Outside the Church there is no salvation," does not mean that only members of the Church will be saved from damnation; as we interpret it now, it means that the fulness of the Christian life cannot be achieved except in the fellowship of the Christian society. For it is by membership of the Christian society that a man makes his public profession of faith in Christ. Baptism, which is the door of entry into the Church, and Holy Communion, by which the members of the Church renew their union with their Living Head,

are visible acts. It is the Church that preserves the continuity of Christian experience. In the words of the Russian theologian, Khomiakoff, "Catholicism, or rather the universality of known truth, and Protestantism, or rather seeking for the truth, are, as a matter of fact, elements which have always co-existed together in the Church. The first belongs to the totality of the Church, the second to each of her members. . . . Each one of us is constantly seeking that which the Church ever possesses." Let us try to put this in another way. No one man can in his own person realise the full content of Christian experience, but every Christian man has his own spiritual experience. If he keeps this to himself, he is hoarding a treasure that he was meant to share. If he brings it into the life of the Church it becomes part of the treasure of Christian experience that the Church has gathered through ages of history. Our wise old Mother knows many things that her children think they have just discovered. She sends them out in quest of truth, not because she does not know it, but because the truth that we find for ourselves is most fully our own. But when we grow weary of the quest, she can tell us what the gathered experience of ages has proved true in the test of life. It does not require any dogma of the infallibility of the Church to assure us that the truths that men have lived by in all the ages of Christian history rest on a stronger basis than any individual experience

—that, in other words, the Church is more likely to be right in regard to the essential truths of the Christian Faith than even the most honest individual seeker after truth.

We have wandered a little away from the idea of the Church as a visible society. There is an invisible Church vastly greater than the Church on earth—" the Church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven and the spirits of just men made perfect." The Church on earth is that part of the great army of God which is on active service. Though it has an infallible Commander, it may disregard His orders or shrink from the cost of His service. Yet " the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it," for it is the visible witness of the fact that Christ is stronger than His enemies.

How can we recover this idea of the Church in an age in which the Holy Catholic Church seems a mere name for a vast collection of Churches and sects, which have no claim to be Catholic and little claim to be holy? I must defer the attempt to answer that question to our next chapter. But one thing may be said here. Loyalty to the idea of the Holy Catholic Church does not mean disloyalty to the Church that for us is the local and incomplete embodiment of that idea. Few things have done more to discredit the Churches in the minds of outsiders than the readiness of some of their members to hold up the mother that bore them to the ridicule of her enemies. Many men

support their Church, but how many love her " as Christ did love His spouse the Church, Who gave Himself for it " ?

I have often found myself applying to the Church to which I rejoice to belong the lines in *The Princess*, in which Tennyson speaks of his mother :

> Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,
> No angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
> In angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
> Interpreter between the Gods and men,
> Who look'd all native to her place, and yet
> On tiptoe seemed to touch upon a sphere
> Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
> Swayed to her from their orbits as they moved,
> And girdled her with music.

" You must love her, ere to you she shall seem worthy of your love." The loyalty that a boy feels for his school, or a patriot for his fatherland, a Churchman ought to feel for his Church. Her reputation has been entrusted to his keeping ; her honour will be dimmed by his unworthiness. Other men may point out her blemishes and rejoice at her failures, and he will answer, " She is my mother."

It is the failure to recognise how human life is enriched by loyalty to a community that has led many people to drift into undenominationalism, or into eclectic societies that gather and dissolve because they are merely fellowships based on common tastes or opinions. It is not good for any man to wander from Church to Church in

search of self-improvement. St. Paul's advice on secular life is even more true of religious life, " Let every man, wherein he was called, therein abide with God." [1] Conscientious conviction may oblige a man to transfer his allegiance from one Christian Society to another, but the light-hearted way in which some men drift from Church to Church shows how inadequately they appreciate the meaning of loyalty.

We cannot defend disloyalty by an appeal to a Catholic Church which we construct for ourselves by cancelling out a thousand years of Christian experience. The separate streams into which the river of organised Christian life has divided have gathered volume and content as they have flowed on through human history. As they converge once more they will bring their special contribution of Christian experience into the Great Church that is yet to be. We are not only guardians of the Catholic traditions of the past, we are makers of the Catholic traditions of the future. We must learn to think less of the Church of yesterday, and more of the Church of to-morrow, for the past passes into the future through the gateway of the present, and " God fulfils Himself in many ways " in the life of His Church. " It is not the splendour of the past, it is the splendour of the future that men are crying for." [2]

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 24.

[2] Figgis: *The Fellowship of the Mystery*, p. 81.

A spiritual society needs a common rite in which its corporate life may find expression, and the Church has such a rite in Holy Communion, which was instituted by Jesus Christ Himself as the sacrament by which His disciples might renew their fellowship with Him and with one another. But, alas, men cannot leave even their holiest things immune from the destructive influence of their incurable curiosity! The schoolboy pulls his clockwork train to pieces to see how it works; the scientist dissects a skylark to find out how he sings. Human knowledge is increased; but the train will never go again, and the skylark will never sing again. When we think of the controversies that have raged for a thousand years around the Eucharist, we understand what Jesus meant when He said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes." [1]

Holy Communion is the consecration of the deep, simple things of Christianity—the gratitude that is renewed in remembrance; the sense of fellowship that is awakened by the consciousness of common dependence; the assurance of contact with Jesus Christ as He strengthens and refreshes His disciples with the gift of His Own life; the hope that sees in its offering of common things the pledge and promise of the day when all creation

[1] St. Matthew xi. 25.

shall be the Body of Christ, and its life-blood His Blood.[1]

What constitutes a valid Eucharist? Not the personal goodness of the consecrator—for Christ is the true Consecrator at every Eucharist—not perhaps the ecclesiastical authority of the minister (though irregularity is not a light thing), but the intention of the disciple to do His Lord's will, and meet Him in the way that He has appointed.

I am thinking here only of the faithful communicant. The Church has always regarded the celebration of the Holy Communion by unauthorised persons as an act of great presumption, to be visited with the gravest ecclesiastical penalties.

The Roman Church denies the validity of all other Eucharists than her own, and the Anglican Church looks with suspicion on communion not celebrated by episcopally-ordained ministers; yet everywhere humble-hearted children of God are "lifted up and strengthened" as they take the broken bread and the poured out wine in grateful remembrance of His death and passion.

If we recognise this first of all, we can begin to consider how we can correct irregularities, and make Holy Communion once more the "effective symbol" of the unity between Christ and His Church. Mystery lives at the heart of religion,

[1] Modern scholars have connected the Eucharist with the Banquet that was traditionally associated with the inauguration of the Messianic Kingdom. St. Luke xiv. 15; xxii. 30.

and while it is true that the Eucharist may mean more than was apparent at the first institution, it is in the simple obedience of humble faith that we learn to understand. I venture to think that communion in one kind, and celebrations at which only the celebrant communicates,[1] are plain departures from the intention of Jesus Christ; but I can see no reason why we should not welcome the presence of those who wish to join in fellowship with those who are communicating just as we welcome the faithful at Confirmations. The secrecy of the Eucharist in the early Church was both dangerous and undesirable—dangerous, because it gave rise to evil surmises and false charges, and undesirable (however necessary in times of persecution) because it deprived the Eucharist of its value as a public witness of the truth that the Christian life is a life of corporate dependence on the Unseen.

I do not think that the Christianity of to-morrow will value the Eucharist less, but I think it will concentrate more on those aspects of the sacrament on which Christian thought can agree. And I think it will bring the sacrament into closer relation with common life. Just as the older sabbatarianism tended to protect the sanctity of Sunday at the

[1] "St. Chrysostom and St. Augustine would have been horrified at the idea that the chief service of the Sunday should be allowed to be a Eucharist without a general communion of the people."—Bishop Gore.

cost of secularising the rest of the week, so the isolation of the Eucharist tends to deprive it of its significance as the consecration of the common things of life. In the early Church the ordinary meal of the Christian household had something of a Eucharistic character—"breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart." [1] In the custom of "saying grace"—now, unfortunately, neglected in many Christian households—we may see a trace of this consecration of common things that finds its fullest expression in the meeting of the children of God at their Father's table, where Christ receives His friends that He may impart to them the gift of His own life. Between the view that regards Holy Communion as merely a feast of remembrance, and the view of those whose unguarded language might lead us to suppose that in the Eucharist Jesus Christ is actually offered again as a vicarious sacrifice—the two inadmissible extremes of Eucharistic doctrine—there is wide scope for divergence of emphasis. I think Christian thought might well accept the statement set forth by the English Non-jurors in 1716: "Though they believe a divine mystery in the Holy Sacrament through the invocation of the Holy Spirit upon the elements whereby the faithful do verily and indeed receive the Body and Blood of Christ; they believe it yet to be after the manner that flesh and blood

[1] Acts ii. 46.

cannot conceive. And seeing no sufficient ground from Scripture or Tradition to determine the manner of it, are for leaving it indefinite and undetermined. Let us not therefore judge one another any more, but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumbling block in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling."

I am constrained to quote again the oft-quoted words of our English Hooker :

" Since we all agree that by the Sacrament Christ doth really and truly in us perform His promise, why do we vainly trouble ourselves with so fierce contentions whether by consubstantiation, or else by transubstantiation, the Sacrament itself be first possessed with Christ or no ? A thing which no way can either further or hinder us, howsoever it stand, because our participation of Christ in this Sacrament dependeth on the co-operation of His omnipotent power which maketh it His Body and Blood to us, whether with change or without alteration of the element such as they imagine we need not greatly to care or enquire. Take, therefore, that wherein all agree, and then consider by itself what cause why the rest should not rather be left as superfluous than urged as necessary."

The idea of sacrifice and the idea of priesthood are closely associated, and some of the deepest lines of division in Christian thought are associated with the question, " Is the Christian minister a

priest?" There seems to be an unbridgeable gulf between those who hold that the whole system of priesthood and sacrifice was done away in the atonement of Christ, and those who believe that the sacrifice of the Cross is perpetuated in a divinely appointed order of priesthood, deriving its authority from the great High Priest of the Church. The reconciliation of these divergent interpretations of the meaning of the Christian ministry is one of the tasks of the future. Meanwhile, a good deal of fresh light has been thrown on the status and work of the Jewish priesthood by modern scholarship. The Jewish priest represented the orderly succession of ministerial office, to which was committed the pastoral and teaching, as well as the ritual side of religion. The modern tendency to exalt the prophetic above the priestly ministry is founded on a false view of Jewish history. The prophet blazed like a comet through the solar system of Jewish religion. He came with a message of God to meet the crises of national history. He exercised no pastoral office, and left no successors to carry on his work.

The New Testament prophet was something like a Diocesan Missioner. "His gifts were those of inspired oratory, of insight into God's dealings with mankind, a strong grasp of spiritual truth, earnestness, a power of arousing enthusiasm, consolation, exhortation, revelation" (Headlam, *Bampton Lectures*). He apparently superseded the

authority of the local officials, and exercised a kind of roving commission for the edifying of the Churches.

With the concentration of the sacrificial system in Jerusalem—however necessary that step may have been as a protection of monotheism—the priestly office lost its pastoral character, and disproportional concentration on ritual observances helps to account for the deterioration of the priesthood in later Jewish history. Yet even the last of the prophets tries to revive the idea of the teaching office of the priest. "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts."[1] The ministry of the Word is quite as much an exercise of the priestly office as the administration of the sacraments.

The tendency among recent Anglican writers has been to connect the priestly office of the minister with the priestly character of the Christian Society for and within which he acts. There is no justification for the claim that every Christian layman is a priest—there is no "priesthood of the laity" as such—but the whole body of believers, clergy and laity together, constitute a society to which has been committed the distinctive functions of the priest—to represent men in their approach to God, and God in His approach to men. As a priestly body the Church offers its intercessions

[1] Malachi ii. 7.

to God; and brings to men the Divine gift of reconciliation. "As though Christ did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." [1]

The strong distrust of sacerdotalism that still exists in Protestant countries is due to the suspicion, for which later mediæval history gives no little warrant, that it involves a claim to interpose human mediation between God and His children. Of course every child of God has, in Christ, a direct right of access to his Father in heaven. But when a group of children of God come together to their Father as an organised section of His family, there must needs be a spokesman to speak in their name, and to bring to them the assurance of their Father's grace. I know that the Roman Church would not accept this as at all an adequate statement of what the Christian priesthood means, but I think it represents, to some extent at least, the teaching of the Orthodox Eastern Church, which has always associated the priestly office very closely with that of the faithful laity. Let me quote some words about this from Professor Bulgakow's paper at the Lausanne Conference:

"The laity, no less than the clergy, has its place and value in the Church as a whole. The status of the layman is not negative, it is not merely a non-clerical status, but is rather a special order, imparted in confirmation.

[1] 2 Cor. v. 20.

" It is the mark of Protestantism to understand and to emphasise this independence of the laity within the Church; though they carry this to an excess, by way of reaction against the opposite excess of Romanism, in which the laity are bound to yield passive obedience to the clergy and thus lose the value that belongs to them.

" Priesthood within the (Orthodox Eastern) Church is related inseparably to the laity, and the relationship is not merely that of ruler to subject. It is also a relation of mutual help and of unity within the subornost. The priest requires the co-operation of the laity in the administration of the sacraments, and the laity take their share in service and sacrament through singing responses and prayers. Laymen, in concert with the clergy, take their part in Church teaching, in the ministry of the word. . . . Laymen have an incontestable right to take part in the election of the clergy, in all its degrees, from that of deacon and reader to that of patriarch.

" The truth of the Church is committed to the whole body, to clergy and laity as an integral whole. No part of the Church can claim infallibility over against the others; even bishops and patriarchs, as Church history sufficiently shows, can fall into error." [1]

May not the doctrine of the Orthodox Eastern Church, when it comes to be better understood by the Churches of the West, afford the *via media* that we need between the rigid sacerdotalism of

[1] Faith and Order Report, pp. 258–9.

the Roman Church and the repudiation of all sacerdotal ideas by the Protestant Churches ?

The subject of the Church brings us to the question of authority. There is a widespread desire to-day for some authority in doctrinal and moral questions to correct the unbalanced individualism that leads to a general breakdown of all standards of belief and conduct, and ends by setting up every man as the infallible pope of his own little world. But what kind of authority do we want ? Not, assuredly, an authority that will relieve the individual of his sense of personal responsibility. Two types of authority are illustrated by a prison and a public school. The prisoner is subject to an authority imposed on him from without and enforced by the threat of coercion. He has no share in the shaping of the regulations to which he is subject, and the tendency of the whole system is not to develop, but to repress, personal initiative. On the other hand, the public schoolboy is subject to an authority that rests on the idea of loyalty, and is designed to develop initiative and intelligent obedience. He inherits traditions that have passed into the life of the society, yet he is also conscious that he is helping to make the traditions of to-morrow. A wise headmaster knows that though the tightening up of discipline may be necessary when things have become slack, any successful reform must enlist the loyal support and intelligent co-operation of the public opinion of the school. It is hardly

necessary to ask to which of these ideals the authority of the Church must conform. The Church is not a state, but a family, and its bond of union is loyalty. Yet it may—and indeed must—demand of its authorised teachers that they shall accept *ex animo* the doctrines and moral principles that they are commissioned to teach; and nothing is more absurd than the outcry of "intolerance" and "heresy hunting" that is raised whenever any Church feels obliged to exercise discipline on a minister who is teaching what he is pledged not to teach.

There are two departments in which the authority of the Church is exercised. The Church has, as our Articles say, "authority in Controversies of Faith." In other words, the interpretation of Holy Scripture must rest, ultimately, on the judgment of the whole Christian society.

"It is by the action of the Church, organised and formal or unorganised and informal, that the advances of Christian thought—the continual and progressive revelations which the Spirit makes to the Christian consciousness—pass from the individual soul into an abiding possession of the Christian community. The more the organised visible Church answers to her ideal, the more fully she performs this function; it is only the authority of the Church that can convert the ideas of private theologians into the faith of a Society." [1]

[1] Rashdall: *Doctrine and Development*, p. 256.

This enrichment of the thought of the Society by its appropriation of the treasures that its children bring to it is always going on, and though no part of the Christian Church is free from the charge of stoning its prophets, their "soul goes marching on" in the thought of the Church. For the most part, this interpretation of Christian theology is an almost unconscious process, but where the fundamental truths of the faith were directly challenged, the Church was compelled to give her judgment. This judgment found expression in the decisions of the General Councils. The General Councils of the fourth and fifth centuries dealt with a few fundamental doctrines of the Faith, founding their judgment on Holy Scripture, and their decisions have been accepted by the mind of the Christian society. The Church has no right to judge any man who refuses to accept the Nicene Creed, but it is bound to say, "We cannot admit that you are a Christian man in the sense in which we use that word." But, on the other hand, no body that claims to be a part of the Catholic Church has any right to impose, as "generally necessary for salvation," anything that the Catholic Church has not imposed. Sectional societies within the Catholic Church may have their own rites and ceremonies, and their own subordinate standards of belief, as necessary conditions of membership, but when these are exalted to a level with the truths on which the Christian Church is founded,

they become badges and tokens of schism and disruption.[1] The controversies of Christian history have, since the close of the age of Councils, been over these subordinate standards of belief, and the practices that they involved. In a reunited Church these would become subject to the law of the survival of the fittest, and would also prove a valuable protection against the mental stagnation that would inevitably result from a completely defined doctrinal system, enforced by ecclesiastical authority. The area of doctrinal agreement would gradually widen, but the day is still far distant when we shall "all come unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God."

The Church has also authority in the sphere of morality. The ultimate authority for every man is his own conscience. True, but conscience must be educated, for it is an inadequate excuse for wrong-doing that "I did it ignorantly, in unbelief." We cannot accept the idea that whatever a man thinks to be right is right for him. There is a collective conscience that belongs to the Christian society, a common point of view that grows through experience and the teaching of the Holy Spirit. The condemnation of polygamy, of slavery, of gladiatorial shows, was not based on

[1] "Until the Church is prepared to be content with the Christian Creed and dispense with articles, formularies of faith, confessions, decrees of councils, and defining all those things which need not be defined, these divisions will continue."—Dr. Headlam: *Bampton Lectures*, p. 206.

texts of Scripture, but on the application of the moral principles of Christianity as they passed into the consciousness of the Church. The moral authority of the Church is more closely akin to the authority of custom than to that of law. It finds its sanction in men's instinctive disapproval of disloyalty rather than in any penal code. Where, as in modern Europe, legal codes are founded, nominally at least, on Christian moral principles, Christian public opinion finds expression in legislation, but the Church must always be in advance of the State in its moral standards, since the State can only enjoin what it can enforce, while the Church is setting before its members an ideal towards which they are to reach up :

> Vows as is a shame
> A man should not be bound by, yet the which
> No man can keep.[1]

Our Anglican Prayer Book asserts that the restoration of "godly discipline" is "much to be desired," to which assertion Charles II is said to have replied, "Then why not restore it ?" Throughout Christendom the weapon of excommunication has become rusty by disuse, though in the mission field it has still real significance. The difficulty about its exercise is that the sins most directly destructive of spiritual life, such as pride, envy, malice, greed, cannot be judged at any human

[1] Tennyson : *Gareth and Lynette.*

tribunal; and to excommunicate a man for wrong-doing while we let wrong-thinking go unpunished seems dangerously near to punishing a man for having been found out. On the other hand, I am inclined to think that private direction—call it "auricular confession," "the sacrament of penance," or what you will—is likely to become more a part of the work of the Christian minister in the future. The way in which this personal ministry is exercised will vary—a confessional-box is not the only place where confessions are made, nor is the vestry the only place where pastor and penitent can pray together. I think we are all coming to recognise that the preaching of sermons is only a small part of the work that belongs to us as the ministers of Divine reconciliation.

I think one of the truths that we most need to recover is that the Church is not an end in itself. The greatest duty of the Church is not self-preservation, but self-sacrifice. The real error of the identification of the Church with the Kingdom of God was that it meant confusing the means with the end.[1] The Church is the instrument that God uses to prepare for His Kingdom by "turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the

[1] The Kingdom of God, as it exists in the present day, is really that unseen company of faithful men and women at once wider and narrower than any organised Church, which the Reformers called "The Invisible Church."

Lord." We Churchmen often seem too much preoccupied with the maintenance of our Society. But if the Church is the Body of Christ it is primarily His organ of service. It is not a mutual improvement society, except in so far as mutual improvement is a necessary condition of effective missionary activity. A man is bound to keep in health in order that he may do his work effectively, but if he comes to make his health his chief concern, he is losing the real meaning of life. If we Churchmen cared more for the missionary work for which the Church exists, we should be less likely to spend our energies in discussing the Church's complaints and symptoms. There is a very unfortunate comma in the authorised version of Ephesians iv. 12, which quite changes the meaning of the verse. What the writer says is that the work of the clergy is to equip the saints (the whole body of the laity) for their task of service in the building up of the body of Christ. It is generally those members of the Church who are least fully engaged in the activities of service who are most anxious about the health of the Church, and least hopeful about its future.

CHAPTER X

THE REUNION OF THE CHURCHES

THE most urgent problem with which the Christian world is confronted to-day is that of reunion. The growth of new Christian Churches that has resulted from the missionary efforts of the last hundred years has shown the impossibility of perpetuating our denominational divisions in the mission field, and we have also begun to recognise how grave a hindrance to the cause of Christianity these divisions are in nominally Christian nations, and how much ill-feeling they still engender among those who should be "fellow-workers unto the Kingdom of God." [1] So throughout the Christian world a centripetal tendency has begun to appear, resting on the conviction that it is the will of God that His Church shall be visibly one. The reunion of the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, the impending reunion of the Methodist Churches in England, and the remarkable union of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches of Canada into one United Church, are all symptoms of this new tendency.

Yet it would be false optimism not to recognise

[1] "It has been confidently asserted that if only the Church were one, at home and abroad, we have now at our disposal all the resources in men and money required to evangelise the world in our generation."—The Bishop of Dornakal at the Lausanne Conference. Report, p. 492.

that the great mass of Christian men and women have not yet awakened to the urgency of this problem. It is, after all, only a little group of leading Churchpeople who attend Conferences, and many years must pass before the conviction spreads to the rank and file of our Church members that only a reunited Church can present the whole Gospel to the whole world.

This indifference is due in part to the strength of denominational loyalty. The various Churches of the modern world have been built up by much sacrifice and service. and are maintained, for the most part, by the contributions of their members, who are well content to dwell peaceably in their habitations. To conceive of a world-wide Christian Society, inspired by one spirit of comradeship and devoted to one purpose, requires a stronger power of imagination than many men are willing to exercise. There is also the genuine fear that the distinctive spiritual witness of their own society may be lost in a reunited Church. Evil as the divisions of the Christian Church have been, they have not been wholly evil. Indeed, it may be that the temporary rending asunder of the Body of Christ was necessary for the preservation of aspects of truth that might have been lost. The only form of reunion which the Protestant Churches will accept must be one that looks to the future rather than to the past, and is not only another name for a reaction to the ideals of the

mediæval Church, or of the Church of the fifth century.

The most important step forward in the reunion movement was the Appeal issued by the Lambeth Conference in 1920. The Lambeth Conference of 1888 had formulated as a basis of reunion the famous Quadrilateral—Holy Scripture, the Catholic Creeds, the Two Sacraments, and the Historic Episcopate, "locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of nations and peoples." In 1920 the Conference incorporated this Quadrilateral in a solemn Appeal to Christendom. After asserting their belief that "all who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and have been baptised into the Name of the Holy Trinity," are sharers with them "in the universal Church of Christ, which is His Body," and that "they do not ask that any one Communion should consent to be absorbed in another," they appeal for "a new and great endeavour to recover and to manifest to the world the unity of the Body of Christ for which He prayed." The grounds of this appeal are first of all "that God wills fellowship," and, secondly, "that it is God's purpose to manifest this fellowship, so far as this world is concerned, in an outward, visible and united Society." They believe "that the conditions on which such a Reunion as is proposed can be based" are:

1. The acceptance of Holy Scripture as "the record of God's revelation to men and

as the rule and ultimate standard of faith."

2. The Nicene and Apostles' Creeds.
3. The Sacraments of Baptism and the Holy Communion, "as expressing for all the corporate life of the whole fellowship in and with Christ," and
4. "A ministry acknowledged by every part of the Church as possessing not only the inward call of the Spirit, but also the commission of Christ, and the authority of the whole body."

They claim that "the Episcopate is the one means of providing such a ministry," and that when the office of a Bishop is "everywhere exercised in a representative and constitutional manner" the Episcopate "is now, and will prove to be in the future, the best instrument for maintaining the unity and continuity of the Church." As a practical suggestion, the Bishops propose a method of mutual authorisation, the ministers of non-episcopal Churches being authorised to minister in Anglican Churches by episcopal ordination, and the Anglican clergy receiving any kind of authorisation needed to qualify them for ministering in the churches of other denominations.

In the conferences that have been held since the issue of the Lambeth Appeal, it has become evident that the first two conditions present no difficulty. Even those Churches that are averse

to credal forms are prepared to accept the substance of the Nicene Creed as a summary of Christian doctrine.[1] The third condition raises one question of importance. The Roman and Orthodox Eastern Churches have inherited the seven sacraments of the mediæval Church and will not easily abandon them. The matter is largely one of definition. If we interpret the word " sacrament " to mean a sacred rite by which we invoke the grace of God, there is no reason why we should refuse the name of sacrament to Marriage and Holy Orders. I have several times been told by leading Free Churchmen that they would value Confirmation, as administered in the Anglican Church, as a service of admission to full membership of the Church. If we regard Penance as a solemn declaration of the Divine forgiveness to a penitent soul who desires thus to be assured of his restoration, no objection need be felt to its inclusion among the sacred rites of the Church. The last of the seven—Unction—has been lost in

[1] " First as to unity of faith. This should be in words which have already been suggested, The Faith of Christ as taught in Holy Scripture and handed down in the Apostles' and the Nicene Creeds. It is not the Creeds or the Scripture that we believe in, but the faith that they teach, and this is of extreme importance, for it means that we are not committed to any particular theory of inspiration, and we accept the Creeds not as infallible or inerrant or necessarily unchangeable documents, but as the traditional expression of the faith in Christ."—Dr. Headlam at the Lausanne Conference. Report, p. 333.

the West except in the form of Extreme Unction in the Roman Church. In its earlier form it was a solemn dedication of a sick person to the healing grace of God. The substitution of the doctrine of resignation for this confident challenge of faith has been a great mistake, and has had much to do with the growth of Christian Science. Like all our prayers, the prayer for health is subject to the qualification, "Thy will be done," yet, "the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." When we have returned to a more Christian view of sickness, the restoration of Unction will not be regarded as a lapse to magic, but as a symbolic expression of the truth that sickness is not always, not even generally, the will of God for His children. All the resources of medical science are gifts of God, which we have no right to neglect, but we are only beginning to understand the subtle interaction of mind and body, and the degree to which medical treatment is aided by the faith that looks to the God of all health for His blessing.

It is the fourth condition of the Lambeth Appeal in regard to which difficulties arise. The statement in the preface of the Anglican Ordinal, that "from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church: Bishops, Priests and Deacons," may be accepted as substantially true, but as to the status, functions and mutual relations of these Orders there is room for much

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difference of opinion. It is better, on the whole, to found our claim for episcopacy on its practical advantages rather than on inferences from the rather obscure history of the first century.[1] The non-episcopal Churches are recognising that superintendent ministers are needed for the efficient working of Church life, and are anxious to claim for themselves that historic continuity which is most naturally expressed in an authorisation of ministry that is given by those who not only "have public authority given unto them in the Congregation to call and send Ministers into the Lord's Vineyard," but have also received that authority along a continuous line of succession. A merely mechanical theory of Apostolic Succession does not take sufficient account of the organic character of the life of the Church, but it cannot be disputed that for fourteen hundred years the whole Christian Church was under the spiritual oversight of bishops authorised by a continuous

[1] "You must assume an apostolic origin for the institution of episcopacy, for no other account of it seems possible; but there is nothing to show that the Apostles made it irrevocably the one and only safeguard of unity. . . . Episcopacy has been the instrument of the Spirit, but it is a flexible instrument, moulded to the needs of successive times; it is conceivable that it may be changed out of recognition, or that another instrument may be found. You may hold with unhesitating faith that the Church of Christ is one, and that its unity will in due time be manifest, but it may be unwise to pin your faith exclusively to episcopacy.—T. A. Lacey, *Unity and Schism*, pp. 48–9.

and unbroken succession. Their method of nomination, the powers they exercised, their relations to the secular authority, varied from time to time, but till the schism between East and West their authority extended over the whole Church, though normally exercised within their own dioceses. There are obvious inconveniences in the concurrent authority of two or more bishops within the same area, but there is no objection in principle to such an arrangement. The Anglican Church, for example, has always recognised the status of Roman Catholic Bishops exercising authority over the members of the Roman Communion in England, though their claim to territorial titles seems to us to involve needless confusion. The Methodist Society in a reunited Church might have its own bishops, side by side with the bishops of the Anglican Communion, both alike deriving their authority from a continuous succession.[1] We should only ask of them what we would gladly concede to the Orthodox Eastern Church, or to the Roman Church, that any doubts as to the reality of that succession should be removed, so that every bishop within the reunited Church may act, and know that he is acting, with the full authority of the whole Church.

The real, and at present insuperable, difficulty is in regard to the intermediate period of a genera-

[1] Compare also the Uniat Churches of the Roman Communion.

tion that must intervene before any new order can come into complete operation. The existing ministers of the non-episcopal Churches are naturally unwilling to take any step that would involve an admission of the invalidity of the commission by which they have exercised their ministry, and if reordination is insisted on as a condition of reunion there is little prospect of its being accepted. The only solution of this difficulty seems to lie in the method of " economy " by which the Orthodox Eastern Church is able to temper the rigidity of its ecclesiastical arrangements. A transitional period necessarily involves compromises, and the existence of episcopally ordained ministers side by side with others not so ordained, within the same Church, though intolerable as a permanent arrangement, does not seem impossible as a temporary expedient. We have to find our way back from a muddle for which we must all share the responsibility, or rather, perhaps, for which none of us in this generation is responsible, and to treat as merely invalid ministries that God has blessed does not seem the most Christian way back.

The reunited Church would include societies varying so much in their *ethos* and outlook that the development of conscious unity would only come slowly. But gradually the special contribution of each would pass into the life of the whole, through the interchange of spiritual experience

and co-operative activity.[1] Rivalries would disappear, and we should realise the truth that "if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it," and "if one member is exalted, all the members rejoice with it." The life of the Spirit would flow unimpeded through the whole body, as it grew conscious of its unity.

The reunited Church would have its proper constitutional system of Councils, local, provincial and national, and a central Council (should its home be in Jerusalem ?) would exercise an advisory rather than an autocratic authority over the whole. If the appointment of the Bishop of Rome as *ex-officio* chairman of this Council would enable the Roman Church to take its place in the reunited Church, few of us would hesitate to accord that recognition to a Church to which the whole Christian world owes more than it is sometimes willing to acknowledge. All this is very far off as yet, and only the most courageous faith can remove the mountains that stand in the way. But if premature action may be foolish, cowardly acquiescence in

[1] "Any real reunited Catholic Church must conserve and include the true religious values for which each Church has historically stood. In a reunited Church there must not be one lost good, but each Church must bring its distinctive contribution to the thought and life and order of the Church as a whole, that through this manifold or many-sided contribution, we may in the reunited Church not only provide for varying forms of faith and worship, but may also the more fully apprehend the manifold wisdom and grace of God."—Professor Shaw at the Lausanne Conference. Report, p. 350.

our present divisions is sinful. Even if it were true, as, fortunately, it is, that the old bitterness between various Churches is passing away, it still remains a scandal and a disgrace that those who profess a common allegiance to Jesus Christ cannot worship together, but must have separate buildings and separate organisations to suit their temperamental differences. Yet so fundamental a change as the resurrection of the Catholic Church out of the tomb where we bury our sectarian allegiances will not come except through a new impulse of the Spirit.

" It is impossible to weld together cold iron, it will have to be molten by the fires of God. We shall have to wait for the stirring of a deeper desire for reunion. It may be that the pressure of events will, in unexpected ways, deepen and widen this desire. Emergencies might well arise that would transform all our differences and bring together in a surprising way all those who ' name the Name that is above every name.' Reunion, when it is brought about, will be due not to the careful articulation of the wisest scheme, but to a great venture of faith in response to the Divine Command —a great determination that there shall be a stirring of the dry bones, and that obsolete differences shall come to an end." [1]

[1] J. Scott Lidgett: *God, Christ and the Church*, p. 276. So the Bishop of Hadersley at the Cheltenham Church Congress: " Real reunion will never be brought about if one Church requires another to surrender her own conviction or her past. Nor will

Every step that we take in the direction of reunion must be marked by complete sincerity. The slurring over of differences, or insincere demonstrations of unity, will bring the nemesis of the reawakening of distrust. Intercommunion, if it means the exercise of Christian hospitality to fellow-Christians out of reach of their own places of worship, is an elementary Christian duty, but if it means an attempt to demonstrate a unity that does not in fact exist, it does not really help forward the cause. Exchange of pulpits may sometimes be desirable, especially when we want to commend enterprises for social welfare in which we are engaged together, but if the object is to show that we are one, when in fact we are still divided, there is at least a danger of insincerity.

In one direction at least a far-reaching opportunity for co-operation is open to us. The great moral issues of modern life call for united action, and in working together for the Kingdom of God we may find a way of developing Christian fellowship. The Stockholm Conference on Life and Work served to show how fruitful a line of advance lies before us in this championship of righteousness and peace in all departments of public life. As I have already said, fellowship does not come through

reunion be possible through negotiations as between political powers. Mutual consecration, if it should be practised, should not be an outcome of negotiations, where each part is forced to make concessions, but it should be a natural, free and glad expression of an already existing friendly and brotherly feeling."

talking about it, but through the inspiration of a common service and sacrifice. It is well that we should explore our differences as we did in the Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne, and learn to understand our respective points of view, but the way of unity is still the way of the cross. It was by being lifted up on the cross that Jesus Christ drew all men unto Him, and it is by the same way of sacrificial service that the Churches that own His authority will attain to the unity of Spirit that will inevitably find expression in unity of outward organisation.

But all possibilities of union depend on one thing. Unity in faith and knowledge are a goal to be attained, but unity in love is the gateway through which we enter on the journey. As Dr. Bernard told us at Mürren years ago, in a sermon which some of us will always remember: "The commandment 'that ye love one another' was a *new* commandment, quite distinct and separate from the commandment to love one's neighbour, which was not new at all. The new commandment is more limited in its application, it had to do not with the whole Jewish nation, still less with humanity at large, but only with the inner circle of Christian discipleship. We are right, I dare say, in trying to enlarge the idea of *fellowship*, so that it may embrace at last all mankind. But the new commandment of the Lord did not impose in the first instance so tremendous or complex a task

upon His disciples. It was only ' Love one another,' and until we have got that far, we are attempting what is beyond us if we try to create a fellowship which shall embrace all mankind. ' We must creep before we can fly,' and until we have realised our fellowship with our fellow-Christians, because they with us are trying to be disciples of Christ, we shall not advance a step towards that larger fellowship of nations, of classes, of races, of which men speak so much to-day."

" By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another." It is as disciples that we learn to love one another, for a disciple is a learner in the school of Jesus Christ. However much he knows, or thinks he knows, he has still so much to learn. And the qualification of discipleship is humility. If the story of our English Augustine and the British bishops is true, it was pride that wrecked the possibility of union between the Roman Mission and the Celtic Church. When we recognise that the service of Jesus Christ is briefly comprehended in these three things, to live, to learn and to love, reunion will not be far away.

Reunion will probably come gradually, beginning with those parts of the world where sectarian differences are less deeply rooted than they are in Europe. Schemes for union are well advanced in Southern India, and China and Japan are moving in the same direction. I have already mentioned

the United Church of Canada, formed by the union of the Presbyterian, Methodist and Congregational Churches. The impulse towards union will gather strength, as its value comes to be proved in experience. There is one possible danger against which we must be on the watch. If the Christian world were to consolidate into three *blocs*—the Papal bloc, consisting of the Roman Church and its Uniat Churches, the Episcopal bloc, with the Anglican and Orthodox Eastern Churches as its chief constituents, and the non-episcopal bloc, including the German Protestant Churches, the English Free Churches, and the great Churches of America, the last state of Christendom would be worse than the first. Union will naturally come most easily between those Christian Societies that have most in common. The real test of the sincerity of the conviction of any Communion that God wills that His Church shall be visibly one will be its willingness to unite with Communions least like itself.

One necessary condition for any reunion is that the Churches shall abandon all attempts to proselytise from one another. In the East, the Roman Church has been a grievous sinner in this respect, and has seemed at least as anxious to detach Orthodox Christians from their allegiance to their own Church as to win the Moslem world for Christ. In the mission field a certain amount of proselytising probably goes on still, though the Edinburgh

Conference did much to restrict this undesirable form of activity. A difficult problem arises where one type of Christianity has failed to maintain its influence, as appears to be the case throughout South America. Yet even in this case to set up a rival Church in an area where the Roman Church is definitely in possession may not be the true solution.

Those, and they are many, who regard the idea of reunion as a fantastic dream, find their strongest argument in the impossibility of holding together in one organised Society such divergent views of Christianity as exist in the separate Christian Communions. They point to the Anglican Church —the most notable effort at inclusiveness in Christian history—as an illustration of a Society perpetually at war within itself. It is true that the Anglican Church presents no such impressive picture of apparent uniformity of belief and order as is represented by the Roman Church, yet, in spite of its internal dissensions, it has made a contribution to Christian thought and activity of which it has no need to be ashamed.

The whole case for reunion depends on the faith that every act of union will raise the temperature of the uniting bodies to a higher degree of Christian devotion. The more that devotion to Jesus Christ becomes the ruling passion of His Church, the less divergences of opinion or of practice will matter. So St. Paul closes the

Epistle to the Ephesians with the salutation, " Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruptibility "—by which he means, I think, " with a love stronger than death." Unless the centripetal force of this common love is stronger than the centrifugal force of racial, temperamental and all other divergences, no reunited Church could hope to hold together. But this would mean nothing less than the failure of Christianity, and we do not believe that Christianity, honestly tried, would fail.

NOTE

With a view to illustrating the extent of agreement that has been reached in regard to the Church I am reprinting the report of the Lausanne Conference on Faith and Order, and the agreed statement of a Conference held at Lambeth in 1922 between representatives of the Anglican Church and the English Free Churches.

A. Lausanne Conference Report

The Nature of the Church

We, members of the Conference on Faith and Order, are glad to report that we have been able to arrive at substantial accord in the following statement of our points of agreement.

I. God, Who has given us the Gospel for the salvation of the world, has appointed His Church to witness by life and word to its redeeming power. The Church of the Living God is constituted by His Own Will, not by the will or consent or beliefs

of men, whether as individuals or as societies, though He uses the will of men as His instrument. Of this Church, Jesus Christ is the Head, the Holy Spirit is continuing life.

II. The Church as the communion of believers in Christ Jesus is, according to the New Testament, the people of the New Covenant; the Body of Christ; and the Temple of God, built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone.

III. The Church is God's chosen instrument by which Christ, through the Holy Spirit, reconciles men to God through faith, bringing their wills into subjection to His sovereignty, sanctifying them through the means of grace, and uniting them in love and service to be His witnesses and fellow-workers in the extension of His rule on earth until His Kingdom come in glory.

IV. As there is but one Christ, and one Life in Him, and one Holy Spirit who guides into all truth, so there is and can be but one Church, holy, catholic and apostolic.

V. The Church on earth possesses certain characteristics, whereby it can be known of men. These have been, since the days of the Apostles, at least the following:

1. The possession and acknowledgment of the Word of God as given in Holy Scripture and interpreted by the Holy Spirit to the Church and to the individual.

2. The profession of faith in God as He is incarnate and revealed in Christ.

3. The acceptance of Christ's commission to preach the Gospel to every creature.

4. The observance of the Sacraments.

5. A ministry for the pastoral office, the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the Sacraments.

6. A fellowship in prayer, in worship, in all the means of grace, in the pursuit of holiness, and in the service of man.

B. Joint Conference Report

The Nature of the Church

(1) The foundation of the Church rests not upon the will or consent or beliefs of men, whether as individuals or as societies, but upon the creative Will of God.

(2) The Church is the Body of Christ, and its constitutive principle is Christ Himself, living in His members through His Spirit.

(3) As there is but one Christ, and one life in Him, so there is and can be but one Church.

(4) This one Church consists of all those who have been, or are being, redeemed by and in Christ, whether they are in this world or in the world beyond our sight, but it has its expression in this world in a visible form. Yet the Church, as invisible and as visible, is, by virtue of its one life in Christ, one.

(5) This visible Church was instituted by Christ as a fellowship of men united with Him and in Him with one another, to be His witness and His instrument in the spread of His Kingdom on earth.

(6) As a visible Church, it must possess certain visible and recognisable marks whereby it can be seen and known by men. These have been since

the days of the Apostles at least the following: (*a*) The profession of faith in God as revealed and incarnate in Christ; (*b*) the observance of the two sacraments ordained by Christ Himself; (*c*) an ideal of the Christian life protected by a common discipline; (*d*) a ministry, representative of the Church, for the preaching of the Word, the administration of the Sacraments, and the maintenance of the unity and continuity of the Church's witness and work.

(7) Baptism is, by the ordinance of Christ and of His Apostles, the outward and visible sign of admission into membership of the Church.

(8) The Church visible on earth ought to express and manifest to the world by its own visible unity the one Life in Christ of the one Body.

(9) The true relation of the Church and local Churches is that which is described in the New Testament, namely, that the Churches are the local representatives of the one Church. The actual situation brought about in the course of history in which there are different and even rival denominational Churches independent of each other and existing together in the same locality, whatever justification arising out of historical circumstances may be claimed for these temporary separations, cannot be regarded as in accordance with the purpose of Christ, and every endeavour ought to be made to restore the true position as set forth in the New Testament.

(10) The Marks which ought to characterise the Church visible on earth are possessed by these existing separate Churches and societies of Christian people in very varying degrees of completeness or

defect. Hence, even though they be parts of the visible Church, they cannot be considered as all alike giving equally adequate expression to the Lord's Mind and Purpose. Some, indeed, may be so defective that they cannot rightly be judged to be parts of that Church. But such judgments, though made in trust that they are in accordance with the Divine Mind, must be regarded as limited to the sphere of the visible Church as an ordered society here on earth. It would be presumption to claim that they have a like validity in the sphere of the whole Church as the One Body of the Redeemed in Christ, for within that sphere judgment can only be given by the All-knowing Mind and Sovereign Mercy of God.

CHAPTER XI

WORSHIP

THE Christian Church exists for two purposes: it is an organisation for service, for carrying on the redeeming work of Jesus Christ in human society; and an organisation for worship, for giving expression to the praise and adoration and self-oblation with which the children of God draw near to their Father in heaven. When either of these aspects of the work of the Church falls into the background its life is impoverished. The last half-century has been marked by a growing recognition within the Church of its call to service; perhaps it will be one of the special tasks of the Christianity of to-morrow to redress the balance by a corresponding recognition of the meaning of worship. For through most of the Christian world to-day worship has lost something of its spontaneousness and inspiration. When we ask why church attendance is declining everywhere, may not part of the answer be that men do not find in our worship the glad consciousness of God that they ought to find? For worship is part of the Christian evangel. So St. Paul urges the duty of intelligent worship on the Corinthian Church on the ground that "if all prophesy, and there come in one unbelieving or unlearned, he is reproved by all, he is judged by all; the secrets of his heart are made manifest;

and so he will fall down on his face and worship God, declaring that God is among you indeed." [1] We are sometimes tempted to ask, rather sadly, whether the casual visitor to our churches would gain the same impression to-day.

I am dealing in this chapter with public worship, but we must always remember that public worship cannot take the place of that more intimate worship of every child of God when he enters into his inner chamber to pray in secret to his Father in heaven. The thought of prayer as worship saves us from the mistake of thinking of it as an attempt to persuade God to let us have our own way. The prayer "Thy will be done" is the greatest of all prayers if it means not mere submission to the inevitable, but the glad confidence that finds love's vindication in the consciousness of God. Prayer is the "Mystical way" not for elect souls alone, but for the ordinary man, hard pressed and harassed by the trivialities of life, who "clasps God's right hand in the darkness, and is lifted up and strengthened."

Yet this desire to have God to ourselves may become a subtle form of selfishness unless it is balanced by the demand of gratitude and piety for the public recognition of God. Moreover, there are times when the inner vision is withdrawn and we need some other lamp from which to re-kindle our own—what Professor Platt calls "the

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 24.

sense of social confirmation." Men often say that they do not come to church, because they can worship God just as well in the field or among the hills. They can, but do they? The truth is, when we try to isolate ourselves from the common life of humanity and " love our love unto ourselves alone " we are punished by the gradual atrophy of our capacity for worship.

Poetry and worship are closely akin, for both are attempts to " use the phenomenal to express the eternal." What Wordsworth says about poetry is so true of worship that I venture to quote his words, substituting " worship " for " poetry " :

" Worship is the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; it is the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all Science. It is the rock of defence for human nature; an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with it relationship and love. In spite of differences of soil and climate, of language and manners, of laws and customs, in spite of things silently gone out of mind and things violently destroyed, worship binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society, as it is spread over the whole earth and over all time." [1]

In the institution of Holy Communion Jesus Christ associated the promise of His presence with a social act, and it was this social act that brought together His disciples " early, before sunrise, on a fixed day to sing together hymns to Christ as

[1] Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. Third Edition.

God, and to take an oath (sacramentum) not for any criminal purpose, but to commit no crime, such as theft, robbery or adultery, and to guard themselves against unfaithfulness."[1] The early Church was cradled in the atmosphere of worship; it was born singing.

What is worship? It is the lifting up of men's hearts to God. Preaching has a twofold purpose. It is the appointed means by which the Gospel of the Grace of God is announced to the world, and it is the means whereby the faithful are instructed and built up in the Christian life. We do not, perhaps, distinguish sufficiently between the evangelistic and pastoral sides of the Ministry of the Word. But, essential as the work of the preacher is, it seems a misuse of language to call listening to a sermon worship. In our Anglican Communion Office, the sermon, following on the reading of the Scriptures, takes its proper place as a preparation for worship. We ask God to speak to us before we lift up our hearts to speak to Him. One advantage of fixed forms of prayer is that they save us from prayers that are really disguised sermons, designed for the edification of the congregation rather than for the expression of their devotions. If this is true of our prayers, it is still more true of our hymns. It would not be easy to exaggerate the influence of hymns in modern religious life, and there is a legitimate place for

[1] Pliny: Letter to Trajan.

hymns that are really sung sermons. Many of our anthems and mission hymns are of this character, and their emotional appeal, though often rather crudely expressed, is sometimes effective. But a hymn is—or should be—normally an act of praise addressed to God, not an exhortation addressed to men. Some of the psalms, and the three great Christian hymns in the opening chapters of St. Luke's gospel, are among the greatest treasures of Christian worship. Among later Christian hymns, the Te Deum stands supreme. In many of our modern hymns sentimentalism [1] has run riot, and the tunes often fit the words only too well. The Christian Church needs a more virile and "numinous" type of hymn to express a more virile and "numinous" type of worship. I am often told that the English people like sentimental hymns, and I fear that it is true; but the highest type of worship cannot be nourished on such food. Three things are essential to any true ideal of worship. The first of these is sincerity. This was, I suppose, part of what Jesus meant when He spoke of worship "in spirit and in truth." Any intrusion of insincerity into our worship is fatal. But this does not mean that the collective worship of the Christian Society must be lowered to the level of the least spiritual member. Men must *learn* to worship, and it is the business of

[1] "Sentimentalism means delighting in feeling for feeling's sake, irrespective of its effect upon our life."—Dr. Figgis.

the Church to set before them an ideal towards which they may reach up. There is nothing insincere in the effort to call our best selves into exercise to express that into which our lower selves cannot enter. Instead of lowering the standard of our worship, we ought to do much more to educate our people in the meaning of worship, as the lifting up of our whole selves to God. Attitude and gesture have their place in Christian worship, and it is not instinct but indolence that makes an Englishman sit down to pray. To mistake slovenliness for sincerity is to act like the man who thinks that rudeness is an evidence of honourable independence. "Good form" may seem a trivial thing, but its effect on character is far deeper than most people realise.

The second essential of all true worship is that it shall have in it that element that Professor Otto has taught us to call the "numinous." In his book on *The Idea of the Holy* (*Das Heilige*) he has done a valuable service to the whole Christian Church by bringing into prominence the non-rational element in Christian experience and worship. The consciousness of a Mysterium Tremendum et Fascinans before Whom man can only bow in awe and adoration is an essential element in all true worship.

The submission of man's nothing-perfect to God's all-complete,
As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to His feet.[1]

[1] Browning: *Saul.*

Christianity has not destroyed this, but it has blended with it a new consciousness of identity. " What is this," asks St. Augustine, " which gleams through me and smites my heart without wounding it ? I am both a-shudder and a-glow. A-shudder, in so far as I am unlike it : a-glow, in so far as I am like it." In Jesus Christ, the Christian has seen the perfect love that casts out fear, but does not cast out reverence. The greatest picture of numinous worship is that of the author of the Book of Revelation : " ' Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive the power, and riches, and wisdom, and might, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' And every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them, heard I saying, ' Unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever.' And the four living creatures said, Amen. And the elders fell down and worshipped." [1]

Christian instinct has always felt that special places (which we rather unfortunately call " churches ") should be set aside for worship, and the numinous aspect of worship is expressed in the shadowed mystery of our Gothic churches in the West and in the Iconostasis that veils the inner sanctuary of an Orthodox Eastern Church.

[1] Rev. v. 12–14.

Men may worship in a comfortably furnished lecture hall, where seats can be let and attractive music provided, but it is a right instinct that desires that places of worship shall express the numinous character of man's approach to God. "How dreadful is this place. This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

Thirdly, worship is a collective act—an attempt to give expression to the unity of the family of God in its common dependence and aspiration. The Lord's Prayer—the model of all worship—is a social prayer: give *us* our daily bread, forgive *us* our trespasses, deliver *us* from the evil one. We are purged from spiritual selfishness as we identify our own needs with the needs of all the children of God. So, in the uncouth language of Psychology, worship is the sublimation of crowd-consciousness. In worship we are lifted out of isolation into the consciousness of fellowship. And this fellowship reaches far beyond the "two or three gathered together." It is in worship that the Church on earth links itself with the order of the spiritual universe, as with all the company of heaven, we praise and magnify God's glorious name. A reaction from the purgatorial teaching of the mediæval Church has led to the omission of all prayers for the dead from the public worship of Protestant Churches. This has been a grievous loss, not only because it has left a deep human instinct unsatisfied, but also because it has left

our worship poorer by the loss of the realisation that

> One family we dwell in Him,
> One Church above, beneath,
> Though now divided by the stream,
> The narrow stream of death.

For if we are one family, it is surely natural and right that we should pray for one another, however little we may know of the conditions of life of those for whom we pray. And this remembrance of our dead is safeguarded when it is, so to speak, enclosed in our worship of the Father of all. "We praise Thy holy name for all thy servants departed this life in Thy faith and fear." Direct communication between the living and the dead has been denied to us, but the spread of Spiritualism has shown how deep the desire is for some assurance of the survival of those whom we have loved and lost. If we can believe that in worship we join with them in the adoration of the Triune God we may send our "ave" ringing across the barrier that hides them from us. In some of our English Cathedrals a heavy screen separates the choir from the nave, and those of us who are kneeling in the nave can hear the voices of those in the inner sanctuary, and join our prayers and praises with them. Even so do we join in worship with all the saints, and if sometimes we catch the sound of a familiar voice in the great chorus of praise

and intercession, is it fantastic to hope that our voices, too, may sometimes be audible to those who once worshipped with us in the nave, and are now passed beyond the screen into the choir? I think the Church of the future will reclaim its right to that larger fellowship of prayer and praise, not praying to the saints—for that is a dangerous compromise with pagan ideas—but praying for them, and asking that their prayers for us may be accepted.

All true worship is founded on the fact that the centre of gravity of religious life is not man but God. Primitive worship represented an effort to bring down the god to his worshippers, that he might confer upon them some boon that they desired. But Christian worship represents an effort to lift up the hearts of men to their God, that they may offer to Him the gift that He desires. I suppose music first began to be used in public worship because it was thought that sweet sounds might attract the god, or noise arouse him. We use music to-day in our public worship, because our "poor bounded words" are inadequate to say all that we want to say. Music is the natural language of praise. I should like the Creed to be sung whenever possible in public worship, because thus we turn our profession of faith into a triumph song. For it is the heart that believes, and the heart means more than the mind. For the same reason, I wish we could restore the

original form of the Creed, "We believe," for belief is not the mere act of the isolated individual, but the collective act of the whole Christian Society —the golden cord that binds the long historic life of the Church in one. Belief without worship remains cold and ineffective: worship without belief lacks dynamic power. "Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship." To know what we worship means turning our Creed into praise.

The culmination of worship is self-oblation. "We offer unto Thee ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice unto Thee." And in this self-oblation is the secret of gladness. Man's acquisitive instinct is never satisfied; the moment's joy over some object attained passes into craving for something more. It is only in giving that man finds a permanent source of gladness, for only in giving does a man enter into the paradox of the Gospel and find himself in losing himself.

> Love took up the harp of life and smote on all its chords with might,
> Smote the chord of self, which, trembling, passed in music out of sight.[1]

From the first, the Eucharist was the service in which Christian worship found its fullest expression. Our Anglican daily offices represent a

[1] Tennyson: *Locksley Hall.*

less intensive form of worship, which was probably always provided for in the Christian Church, for we cannot always live on the hill-tops. Yet the deposition of the Eucharist from its right place as the great act of Christian worship has been a real impoverishment of the spiritual life of the Church. Professor Otto writes of Holy Communion :

" For Protestants it is to be kept entirely apart from the regular and congregational Divine Service, and should be reserved for particular feasts, for celebration at evening or in the night stillness. It ought to be withdrawn altogether from the use and wont of every day and become the most intimate privilege which Christian worship has to offer."

I cannot believe that this idea of Holy Communion as a special privilege reserved for an inner circle is a true interpretation of the intention of Jesus Christ. Experience has shown that a service that manifestly centres, not in the man who worships, but in the Christ Whom he worships, has an appeal to which simple-hearted men and women are able to respond. There is a widespread desire in Protestant countries for a more sacramental kind of worship, less spectacular than the Roman Mass, but warmer and more intimate than existing forms of service.

Yet I doubt whether the multiplication of Eucharists that has been a feature of the Anglo-

Catholic movement has been altogether a gain. "Low Mass" is unknown in the Orthodox Eastern Church, where the one Eucharist of Sunday, celebrated with every accessory of music and ceremonial that can help to consecrate colour and fragrance and sound to the service of God, comes very near to the ideal of Christian worship. It is congregational, for the people take their part under the leadership of the deacon, and it has a spontaneousness and gladness that often seem wanting in the well-drilled High Mass of the Roman Church, which some of our Anglican Churches have unfortunately set up as their model.

There are two features of Christian worship that will, we hope, take a larger place in the Church life of to-morrow. The first of these is flexibility. I do not mean by this, variety. The Church of the future must admit of much variety in the forms of its worship. There is something incongruous in vesting African native pastors in surplice and scarf, or robing Chinese bishops in rocket and chimere. The outward forms of worship must vary with variations of race and climate and association. In the words of the compilers of our English Prayer Book, "We think it convenient that every country should use such Ceremonies as they shall think best to the setting forth of God's honour and glory, and to the reducing of the people to a most perfect and godly living, without error or superstition." But by flexibility I mean that we

must abandon the idea, into which the Anglican Church has drifted, of a rigid and uniform type of public worship into which special intercessions and other variations can only be introduced at the cost of illegality. It was the breakdown of this effort at rigidity that led to the demand for a revised Prayer Book. The book that was proposed was still based on the idea of uniformity, and while it might have served the immediate needs of the Church, it was too inflexible to provide a permanent framework of worship for a living Church.

The ideal form of public worship would be one in which all the congregation was trained to take part, and which moved from instruction through penitence and intercession to adoration and the reconsecration of the whole body to the service of Jesus Christ. The intercessions should not generally take the form of one long prayer, but rather of petitions to which the congregation could respond, and the element of thanksgiving should be more prominent than it is in most of our present forms of service. It is significant that the most popular services in the Church of England to-day are the Harvest Thanksgiving services that some superior people affect to despise. Bishop Gore has told us that the Eucharist in the early Church had something of the character of a Harvest Thanksgiving service. As its name implies, it was essentially a service of thanksgiving.

The value of the ordered sequence of the Christian

Year is now being recognised by the Protestant Churches, and it will undoubtedly be part of the inheritance into which the Church of the future will enter. It will also enter into a rich inheritance of forms of devotion which ought to be made available for the worship of the Church of the present.

We are also beginning to recognise the value of silence in our Christian worship. There is a thrilling moment in the great epic of worship, the Book of Revelation, where it is written, " There was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." The Society of Friends has maintained its witness to the value of quiet waiting on God, and our Anglican services do not gain in helpfulness from the fact that something is always going on and even the shortest intervals of silence are filled up by the improvisations of the organist, as though we were afraid to be quiet.

" The Silent Worship of the Quakers is a realisation of Communion in both senses of the word, inward oneness and fellowship of the individual with invisible present Reality, and the mystical union of many individuals with one another. In this regard there is the plainest kinship between the two forms of worship which, viewed externally, seem to stand at the opposite poles of religious development, viz. the Quaker meeting and the Roman Catholic Mass. *Both* are solemn religious observances of a numinous and sacramental charac-

ter, *both* exhibit alike an inner straining not only to realise the presence of God, but to attain to a degree of oneness with Him." [1]

But we must not make the mistake of supposing that keeping silence before God is an easy thing. Unless there is a common purpose, the worshippers will fall back into detachment and isolation. It is the *fellowship* of silence that we need—the consciousness of being *together* in the realised presence of God.[2] "Where," writes Professor Otto, "lies the essence of the sacramental? It is in fact in the expression of the English High Churchmen—the 'real presence,' the real presence of the transcendent and holy in its very nature in adoration and fellowship, so as to be laid hold of and enjoyed in present possession. No form of devotion which does not offer or achieve this mystery for the worshipper can be perfect, or can give lasting contentment to the religious mind." [3]

In England we are only beginning to recognise the desirability of keeping our places of worship

[1] Otto: *Idea of the Holy*, p. 218.

[2] "There is some subtle telepathy that comes into play in the living silence of a congregation which makes every earnest seeker more quick to feel the presence of God, more acute of inner ear, more tender of heart to feel the bubbling of the springs of life, than any one of them would be in isolation. Somehow we are able thus to 'lend our minds out' as Browning puts it, or at least to contribute towards the formation of an atmosphere that favours communion and co-operation with God."—*Concerning Prayer*, p. 124.

[3] Otto: *Idea of the Holy*, p. 219.

open all day, so that men and women, hard pressed in the battle of life, may find a quiet place for communion with God. Of course men can pray everywhere, in crowded streets, or among the hills, or in the factory, or the coal-mine. But just as Jesus Christ went apart into desert places to pray, so modern life, with its strenuous activities, needs opportunities of quiet that cannot always be found in the homes of the people. Indeed, we want to make our churches real homes of the people, not merely places where they can come for an hour on Sunday. And if they are to be homes of the people, it is worth while to try to make them beautiful, so that men's ideas of God may be associated with beauty, in contrast with the ugly and noisy things with which modern life has filled the world. Yet it is possible, even now, to wander as a stranger through many of our English towns and not find a single place of worship with open doors to welcome the casual passer-by to rest and pray. The danger of occasional acts of irreverence, or the theft of a hassock or a hymn-book, is not an adequate excuse for this refusal of Christian hospitality. Even if a tired work-girl leaves the crumbs of her sandwich in the pews, or a tramp lies down to sleep, like Jacob, in our Bethel, who knows that God may not turn the sandwich into a sacrament, or grant to the tramp as he sleeps the vision of a ladder that leads up to heaven? If we could think of our churches as belonging,

not to the congregation, but to God, we should not deny to His children access to their Father's house.

At this point we must take account of an objection that is often made to all sacramental worship. Is not God always present in the life of His children ?

> Why, where's the need of Temple, when the walls
> O' the world are that ? [1]

Professor Otto has dealt so well with this point that I am constrained to quote him again.

" We say, then, that this doctrine of the omnipresence of God—as though by a necessity of His being He must be bound to every time and to every place, like a natural force pervading space —is a frigid invention of metaphysical speculation, entirely without religious import. Scripture knows nothing of it. Scripture knows no ' Omnipresence,' neither the expression nor the meaning it expresses ; it knows only the God Who is where He wills to be, and is not where He wills not to be, the ' deus mobilis,' Who is no mere universally extended being, but an august mystery that comes and goes, approaches and withdraws, has its time and hour and may be far or near in infinite degrees ' closer than breathing ' to us or miles remote from us. The hours of His ' visitation ' and of His ' return ' are rare and solemn occasions, different essentially not only from the ' profane ' life of every day, but also from the calm confiding mood of the believer, whose trust is to live ever before

[1] Browning : *Epilogue.*

the face of God. They are the topmost summits in the life of the Spirit. They are not only rare occasions, they must needs be so for our sakes, for no creature can bear often or for long the full nearness of God's majesty in its beatitude and in its awefulness. Yet there must still be such times, for they show the bright vision and completion of our sonship, they are a bliss in themselves and potent for redemption. . . . And a Divine Service would be the truest that which led to such a mystery and the richness of grace that ensue upon the realisation of it. And if it be asked whether a Divine Service is able to achieve this, let us answer that although God indeed comes where and when He chooses, yet He will choose to come when we sincerely call upon Him and prepare ourselves truly for His visitation." [1]

There are evident signs that the Christian Church will have to meet an attack on public worship from the standpoint of Psychology. We shall be told that our worship is nothing but a carefully organised method of auto-suggestion—that the fragrance of incense, lights and music, or the ordered silence of Quaker gatherings, or the rousing chorus of a Salvation Army prayer meeting, exercise a kind of hypnotic influence over different kinds of minds, differing in no essential way from that produced by the chants of priests in heathen temples, or the gesticulations of the medicine man at tribal festivals. I have already

[1] Otto: *Idea of the Holy*, pp. 219–20.

said something about the danger of the present tendency to rest the chief weight of Christian apologetic on experience. If our belief in God depends on the feeling of communion that worship aims at arousing, how can we be sure that we are not deceiving ourselves ? The truth is, heathenism founds its faith on experience, while Christianity founds its experience on faith. The heathen worships in order to believe, and finds the evidence of the existence of his god in the ecstasies and emotions of his worship. But the Christian worships because he already believes. He is not feeling across the " illimitable inane " for a god whom he can worship. He knows that he has a Father in heaven and that Jesus Christ is the " effulgence of His glory," and that, as Holy Spirit, He is the inspirer of all true worship. So he does not worship in order to believe ; he believes in order to worship. So Christian worship is never irrational. Ceremonial accessories are part of the language in which adoration finds expression ; if they are " dark and dumb " ceremonies, they fail of their purpose, and hinder, instead of helping, the devotions of the worshippers. Many of our acts of worship are instinctive—the lifting up of our hands to bless, the folding of our hands to pray, the reaching out of our hands to receive. Music expresses the " togetherness " of worship ; incense (against which English people have so strange a prejudice) its aspiration ; light and colour, its gladness. They

help to intensify the emotions that they express, but the emotion is not created by its expression. And they are not an essential part of Christian worship.

What is the ultimate significance of worship? Can we find an answer in St. Paul's reference to the Holy Spirit as "making intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered"? "He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God." Is not the ultimate reality of worship just this, that God is holding communion with Himself through the medium of the human personalities that He has created? Coleridge writes:

> And what if all of animated nature
> Be but organic harps diversely framed,
> That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps,
> Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
> At once the soul of each, and God of all?[1]

But "animated nature" cannot be an adequate channel for this return of God to Himself, for nature cannot love God, and perfect worship can only spring from perfect love. Our disunion and selfishness and "low desires" obstruct the flow of the Divine life as it seeks to return to Itself through the medium of humanity. So our worship must begin with penitence; its first prayer must be, "Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name."

[1] Coleridge: *The Æolian Harp.*

One human life offers to God still the perfect worship that is the outcome and expression of perfect love; and when we pray "in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ," we are linking our worship with that perfect worship offered on our behalf. The Church is the Body of Christ, not only as the organ of His service, but also as the channel of His worship. Unto God the Father—in Jesus Christ—through the Holy Spirit—so always and everywhere humanity exists *ad majorem Dei gloriam.*

> For so the whole round world is every way
> Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.[1]

[1] Tennyson: *The Passing of Arthur.*

CHAPTER XII

THE BIBLE OF TO-MORROW

(1) The Old Testament

IN considering the place of the Bible in the Christianity of to-morrow, it will be convenient to deal separately with the Old and New Testaments as their relation to Christianity are not the same. The Old Testament is the adopted child of the Christian Church ; the New Testament is her own offspring. Moreover, the results of modern criticism, if we accept them, involve a much more far-reaching reconstruction of outlook in the case of the Old Testament than in the case of the New.

The results of a hundred years of literary and historical criticism of the Old Testament have left the ordinary layman bewildered. He does not see how to steer a course between Fundamentalism on the one side and the practical abandonment of the Old Testament on the other. We have not done nearly enough to show him that a frank acceptance of the new views of the Bible will give him a nobler conception of the Old Testament than the old literal method of interpretation could give. But first of all we would ask him to remember that many of the leaders of Old Testament criticism in the last century were earnest and devoted Christian men whose only desire was to find and

follow the truth. The idea that some Fundamentalists seem to suggest, that we are confronted by a conspiracy of evil men whose aim is to undermine the faith of Christian men and women, will not stand serious examination. Secondly, we do not claim that all the conclusions of modern criticism are to be accepted without question. All that I am saying in this chapter is based on the assumption (which I believe to be true) that in broad outline the results that have been reached are not likely to be challenged in the future, except by those who repudiate altogether the critical method.

How, then, did the Old Testament come to be? The Hebrew people first appears in history as a group of tribes belonging to the Shemitic family, closely akin to the Moabites, Ammonites and Edomites, and more remotely related to the Syrian and Babylonian peoples. They shared the traditions and legends that belonged to the race; and they had also their own body of tradition in the stories and war songs recited by the camp fires of the tribes, and a simple code of law suited to a nomadic people, which grew in content when they exchanged the nomadic life for the settled life of agriculture and village communities. For centuries these early traditions were passed on from father to son before they began to find a place in literature. The first writer, or group of writers, who essayed to gather these legends and laws into a consecutive

narrative belonged to the Southern Kingdom. We call this narrative J, because the name Jehovah (Yahweh) is used for God. We can trace this narrative from the creation story of Genesis ii to the end of the reign of David. It has certain clearly marked characteristics. The style is free and poetical, the theological conceptions are simple and anthropomorphic, and ethical ideas are connected less with obedience to law than with the personal relation of the people with God. The early Shemitic stories of the Garden of Eden and the Flood are lifted into a higher moral atmosphere, and given a new spiritual significance. The date of J is uncertain, but evidence seems to point to the eighth century B.C.

A little later a second collection of early traditions appears. This is known as E, because the name Elohim is used for God. E seems to be the work of a group of prophetic writers of the Northern Kingdom. It begins with the call of Abraham, and carries the story down to the time of Ahab, or perhaps even later. It has a stronger theological motive than J and the naïve conception of a God who "walked in His garden in the cool of the day" is replaced by a more august idea of the Divine Being Who is the Sovereign rather than the companion of His people, and Who communicates with them by angels and by dreams, rather than face to face. The writers have also a deeper conception of the progressive character of the

religious life of the Hebrew people. E would seem to belong to the short period of prosperity in the Northern Kingdom that preceded its rapid decline and fall. At some period after this—perhaps during the Babylonian exile—the two narratives were woven together, but not so closely as to prevent at least a conjectural separation. Before this stage was reached, the Book of Deuteronomy was written. Deuteronomy is, in many ways, the greatest book of the Old Testament. No other book exercised so great an influence over all subsequent Jewish literature, and no other was so often quoted by our Lord. It set the Jewish legal system, as it then existed, against the background of the two-fold law of love—"thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thy neighbour as thyself."

After the exile, a company of priestly writers drew up a complete Code of legal and ceremonial regulations, incorporating earlier legal codes and traditions. This work, which we call P, runs parallel with the earlier prophetic JE, beginning from the creation story of Genesis i.–ii. 4. Its style is clearly marked and its point of view strongly sacerdotal. Finally, the interweaving of P with JE gave to the Jewish people the Pentateuch as we have it to-day.

Somewhere about the fourth century B.C., or perhaps later, all fragments of prophetic writing that could be found were gathered into four books —Isaiah, which was really a collection of the work

of Isaiah, and of two other prophets, with other prophetic fragments; Jeremiah, a rather confused collection of records of the teaching and life of the prophet; Ezekiel, almost certainly as written by the prophet himself; and the Book of the Twelve, containing prophetic writings covering not less than four hundred years, from Amos, the earliest of the literary prophets, to Jonah, Joel, "Malachi" and the Apocalyptic fragments that form the latter chapters of Zechariah. These four books, with the four historical books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings (the "Former Prophets") became the second volume of the Jewish Bible. About a hundred years before Christ, a third collection of Sacred Writings ("Kethubim") was made, including the Wisdom books (Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes); the Book of Chronicles, a late priestly reinterpretation of Hebrew history, continued through the books of Ezra and Nehemiah; the Psalms—the hymn-book of the Jewish Church—the Song of Songs; the stories of Ruth and Esther; and the Book of Daniel. But this group never attained to the same dignity as the two older collections of the Law and the Prophets.

If this account of the making of the Old Testament is true, how does it affect the value of the whole? Undoubtedly it affects its historical value very greatly. But historical value was not the thing about which the writers were greatly concerned. Essentially they were moral teachers,

men of God who cared supremely about the spiritual interpretation of human life. So the Old Testament becomes the record of the progressive revelation of God given to a people elected to be the teachers of the world in the sphere of religion, as the Greeks were its teachers in the sphere of art and philosophy, and the Romans in the sphere of government. The story begins with Moses, who welded together the nomadic tribes into the germ of a nation, and gave them a simple code of law and a God to go before them. In later Hebrew thought there was a tendency to attribute the whole legal system to Moses, just as all Jewish hymns tended to be ascribed to David, and all Wisdom literature to Solomon. Even the post-exilic ritual of the Temple was dated back to the Tent in the wilderness. But if Moses did not give the people an elaborate system of ritual and legal regulation, he laid the foundations of all later prophetic teaching by establishing the relations between Yahweh and the people on the basis of a covenant. Yahweh was the God of Israel, not of necessity but by His own free choice. So He differed from the gods of the nations around, who were bound to the tribe just as firmly as the tribe was bound to them.

At first Yahweh was mainly the war god of the people. It was he who led them to battle and prescribed the extinction of hostile peoples. After the settlement in Canaan, he became identified

with the Baalim or agricultural deities of the country, whose licentious worship roused the indignant protests of the prophets. Hebrew religion was in danger of losing its distinctive character and sinking to the level of that of the other Shemitic peoples. It was the prophets who saved the situation. Three great discoveries lifted the religion of Israel once for all out of heathen associations.[1] The first of these was the discovery which finds its earliest expression in the prophecies of Amos, that Yahweh was not only the God of Israel, but also the God and Judge of all the nations. So the gods of the nations were idols, their Baalim were *bosheth* (vanity). It is difficult for us to realise now how tremendous a revolution in human thought is represented by this proclamation of Monotheism. It was nothing less than a declaration of war against all the other religions of the world. It drew as deep a trench across human history in the region of religion as Copernicus drew in the region of astronomy. Nothing could ever be the same again when the God of Israel had claimed all the world for His kingdom.

The second great discovery reaches its complete expression in Isaiah's great title, " The Holy One of Israel." Scholars tell us that the earlier meaning of " Holy " was devoid of moral significance, but

[1] To what extent these truths may have been included in Mosaic teaching we cannot tell. They had certainly been lost in the ages that intervened before the rise of the prophets.

what Isaiah meant was that God was separated, by His perfect goodness, from all that was unjust or impure or cruel or base. So alone among all the religions of the ancient world, Israel, through the voice of its prophets, declared the supreme moral character of its God. Such a proclamation, once made, could never be rescinded. However far the people might fall below their own moral standard, above them towered the inflexible judgment of a God of perfect goodness—" Of too pure eyes to behold iniquity."

The third great discovery, beginning with Hosea and culminating in Jeremiah and in the evangelical prophet of the Exile, was the fact of the Divine Love, not only for the nation as a whole, but also for the individual. The Babylonian exile, which destroyed, for a while, the continuity of the national life, helped to establish this new sense of personal relationship with God, which finds expression in many of the Psalms, and which led, after the restoration, to the gradual dawn of the conception of personal survival after death.

The sovereignty, the righteousness and the love of God—we have called them discoveries, but more truly they were tremendous ventures of faith. They were not conclusions to which men arrived by a process of reasoning; they were (so the prophets claimed) truths that God Himself had revealed to them. And, indeed, how else could they have known them? Part of what we mean

by inspiration is just this realisation of God that made the Hebrew prophets the greatest pioneers of religious advance in the pre-Christian world.

It has been rather the fashion to decry the post-exilic period of Jewish history as "the dark night of legalism." But this is a profound mistake. We know now how rich was the literary output of the period: Job, "the greatest poem in the literature of the world"; the Book of Jonah, the greatest missionary tract ever written; the sombre music of Ecclesiastes; the shrewd common sense of Proverbs; and Daniel, the parent of the Apocalyptic literature that kept alive through dark times the hope of a Divine deliverance. The ritual of the sacrificial system witnessed to the truth of the unapproachable holiness of God, and passed on from generation to generation the consciousness of man's need of atonement.

When once we have grasped the central idea, we can take up the study of the Old Testament with new interest. We are no longer troubled to justify the inadequate moral standards of early Hebrew religion, nor perplexed when we find ourselves in the atmosphere of the miraculous. The early history of every people begins in fairy-land—it is right that it should—only it must not stay there. But the fairyland of Hebrew history is full of God. Throwing back their thought to the dim beginnings of their national history, the prophets were very sure that God was behind it

all. So they overleapt all secondary causes, and pictured Him as intervening directly. But what mattered was not the method of Divine intervention, but the fact that a controlling purpose had been at work in the national history. Yet the prophets are under no illusions about their own people. They are a stiff-necked and perverse generation who are for ever turning from the call of God to serve their own ends. In the Old Testament God's grace and man's ingratitude meet face to face. No other nation has ever woven into its literature so frank an admission of its own failure. It was in this unpromising soil that the one monotheistic religion of the ancient world grew up and lived on till it could pass on its conception of God as a legacy to Christianity. Without that legacy, how could Christianity ever have come to be ?

From this general outline let us turn to some specific features of the Old Testament.

1. Modern criticism has taught us to think of the prophets less as foretellers of the future than as forthtellers of the Divine will and purpose in relation to the circumstances of their own time. Their predictions were founded on their belief in the certainty of the vindication of the moral law. Sin would inevitably bring punishment ; repentance would be met by Divine forgiveness ; however the chosen people might fail, there would always be a faithful remnant through whom God would carry on His purpose of good for humanity. But

the prophets were not determinists like the Apocalyptic writers who followed them. They believed that God's purpose might be changed by man's repentance (see especially the Book of Jonah).

2. The earlier prophets were great social reformers. Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah were stern in their denunciation of the injustice, heartless luxury, venality and commercial dishonesty that made the ostentatious parade of religion a mockery. No one can read the Hebrew prophets without finding his conscience stirred with a new sense of social responsibility. "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"[1] The post-exilic prophets were less occupied with social questions, for the comparatively poor company of returned exiles, governed by foreign rulers, had little opportunity for "oppression and robbery." The special danger that these prophets had to meet was a harsh and self-centred nationalism that saw, outside the "narrow warmth of their fold," only a world destined to destruction. The evangelical note of the great prophet of the exile whose writings have been incorporated in the Book of Isaiah (Isaiah xl.–lvi.) is carried on in the Book of Jonah, and finds an echo in the words of the last of the prophets: "For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, My name is great among the Gentiles, and in

[1] Micah vi. 8.

every place incense is offered unto My name, and a pure offering; for My name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts." [1]

3. Many of the prophets "learned in suffering what they taught in song." Hosea, amid the ruins of his home life; Jeremiah, facing alone the "jingoism" of the politicians of Jerusalem; Ezekiel, "heart-sick at having all his world to blame," and most of all the prophet of the exile, with his picture of the suffering servant of Yahweh, despised and rejected of men, smitten for the transgressions of the people—all alike found their own suffering a way of insight into the character of God.

4. I have said that the main purpose of the prophets was not to predict the future, but to interpret the present. Yet there was a dream that floated before their minds, changing its shape, as dreams do, but never for long forgotten—the dream of the ideal King, of the Davidic house, but with more than the Davidic greatness, whose kingdom should be the kingdom of righteousness and peace. Modern criticism has thrown much fresh light on the development of the Messianic idea. In most of the peoples of the world there have been dreamers who have pictured a golden age, when the evils of the present will be done away. Such dreams are a witness to the unconquerable optimism that lives at the heart of humanity.

[1] Malachi i. 11.

Long before they became articulate in the work of the prophets, such dreams had a place in the life of the Hebrew people. It was the special work of the prophets to spiritualise them, and give them moral value.

It is possible to distinguish three types of thought in these anticipations of the future. The oldest and most persistent is probably an inheritance from Shemitic tradition. Its keynote was the "Day of Yahweh," and the event to which it looked forward was an intervention of God to break the power of the enemies of His people and establish a golden age of national prosperity. In its popular form this idea had little moral significance and the efforts of the prophets to moralise it were never quite successful. Right on to the end of pre-Christian Jewish history the idea of an apocalyptic "Day of Yahweh" persisted.

In later days of the Hebrew monarchy, when the time of David had won "a glory from its being far," men dreamed of a warrior king who should win back to the nation its independence and build up a world-empire with Jerusalem as its centre. The prophets tried to give this ideal a deeper religious value by picturing the Davidic king as an ideal ruler, whose kingdom should be founded not on war and oppression, but on righteousness and peace. In Isaiah he is the king of the four-fold name (Wonderful-counsellor, Hero-God, Father-everlasting, Prince-of-peace); in Jeremiah he is

the righteous Branch of David, whose name shall be called "the Lord is our righteousness," in the prophet of the exile he is the anointed servant of Yahweh, whose office it will be to bind up the broken-hearted and proclaim liberty to the captives; in Zechariah he is the king who comes to Zion, just, and having salvation, lowly and riding upon an ass—the king whose dominions shall be from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth, who shall speak peace to the nations. So the picture shines and shifts through all the teaching of the prophets.

A third type of ideal is to some extent a blending of the other two. It is the ideal of a kingdom purged of its nationalist associations, resting on a foundation of moral law accepted and obeyed; a kingdom that God would establish as soon as men had, by repentance and moral renewal, made themselves ready for it. For this kingdom Israel was called to prepare by becoming a missionary nation. It was this ideal of the kingdom that passed over directly into Christian thought.

5. Fact and legend mingle in the early narratives of the Old Testament, but their value lies in the permanent moral truths that they express. We must be content to surrender the old method of interpretation that found "types" of Christ in the stories and ritual of the Old Testament—a method that often became fanciful and even fantastic. Yet we can recognise in the sacrificial

system of post-exilic Judaism an attempt to give expression to deep truths about the relation of man to God, which found their full significance in " the Lamb of God, Who taketh away the sin of the world." And if we choose, for our own spiritual edification, to see foreshadowings of Christian truth in incidents and ceremonies of the Old Testament, as St. Paul saw Christ in the rock that —so legend said—followed the Children of Israel on their desert journey, such methods of exegesis are quite legitimate, so long as we do not build on them a doctrinal system for which we claim the authority of Holy Scripture. Next to reliance on isolated texts, the mystical method of interpretation is most liable to lead us astray in our study of the Bible. We are safest when we are content to follow the plain meaning of Holy Writ, not asking from it what it does not profess to give.

Much of the difficulty that people feel about the Old Testament is due to the prosaic character of the English mind. No doubt this tendency to think in prose is of value for the special work that our race has been called to do in the world, but when we are dealing with the deeper issues of life we need the help of the poet as well as of the scientist and the historian. For poetry, like all art, is an attempt to interpret things seen as the symbols of things unseen. The aim of prose is accurate description, its truth is the truth of fact; while the aim of poetry is to " use the phenomenal

to express the eternal," its truth is the truth of idea. To Peter Bell, who was a prosaic soul,

> A primrose by the river's brim,
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more.

But to the creator of Peter Bell "the meanest flower that blows could give thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears," and to Tennyson the "flower in the crannied wall" was a revelation of "what God and man is."

A good deal of the Old Testament is poetical in form, and most of it is poetical in outlook. It is dominated by the consciousness of "something behind." Even the kings of Israel and Judah—the bugbear of our school Divinity lessons—as they pass over the stage, are measured by a different standard from that of the "secular" historian. The thing that matters, in the view of the writer, is the Divine verdict on all that they did. And all the deeper thoughts about God in the Old Testament catch fire and turn into poetry. It is because they are poetry that they have become the permanent possession of humanity, for the poetry that men write lives after them, while the prose is oft interred with their bones. Why? Because facts belong to the present, while ideas belong to all time. We may discuss the historical origin of Hamlet, but we know that in reality it does not matter, for tragedy has to do with things that are always

true. If the Old Testament had been a scientific treatise or a historical record, it would long ago have been relegated to the bookshelves of students of antiquity. It lives to-day, not in virtue of its historical framework, but in virtue of its insight into the permanent realities of human conduct and character. As the poet has told us, Jacob's ladder is still set up between heaven and Charing Cross; the Abraham in each of us learns the sacrificial meaning of fatherhood; the Moses in each of us learns to bear with ingratitude and disappointment and to die in faith with the Promised Land still unreached; the Jonah in each of us discovers that he cannot escape from God; the Jeremiah in each of us learns how a man must, if need be, stand alone for God. What a storehouse of human experience we find in the Psalter, from the hope that is akin to despair to the courageous confidence that triumphs over despondency. The value of the psalms is not affected by any questions about date or authorship; they belong to the permanent experience of mankind. If, as we now believe, some of them date from the same heroic period of the Maccabees that gave us the Book of Daniel, we can welcome this bridging of the gulf that formerly seemed to separate the Old Testament from the New. We ought to be prepared to recognise quite frankly that the so-called imprecatory psalms represent an attitude of mind that has no legitimate place in Christian

thought. If the writers of the Old Testament had been able to arrive at an adequate idea of God, would there have been any need for the New? The remarkable thing about the psalms is not that they often reflect the inadequate moral standard of pre-Christian religion, but that they so often rise above this standard, and see God, not as men see a mirage in the desert, but as they see far away the mountains towards which they are travelling.

To deal in detail with our Lord's attitude towards the Old Testament would be too large a task, but three things may be said.

1. He accepted the conception of God that had been reached by the prophets and psalmists as the foundation on which He built His own teaching. He unquestionably believed Himself to be the Divinely anointed King whose coming they had foretold, and on more than one occasion He seems to have deliberately set Himself to fulfil Old Testament predictions. It was He Who first linked the idea of the Messianic King with that of the suffering servant of God in Isaiah liii.

2. He does not seem to have been interested in questions of date and authorship, in regard to which He accepted the current views of the time. What He cared for in the Old Testament was its appeal to conscience and heart. His own human consciousness was nourished on the psalms and the prophets, which were the only literature that

He knew. But from the first His teaching differed from the expository teaching of the scribes in its directness. "He spake as one who had authority."

3. He constantly emphasised the inadequacy of the moral standards of the Old Testament, and asserted His right to impose a higher standard on His disciples. He repudiated the bare literalness that had turned the Sabbath law from a kindly provision for human well-being into an intolerable burden. One of His utterances is described by the evangelist as "making all meats clean."[1] His claim that He came to fulfil the law in itself implies the preparatory character of the Old Testament. There is no doubt that the Pharisees regarded Him as a dangerous "Modernist," laying impious hands on the sacred *Torah*.

These considerations should be in our minds when the attempt is made to discredit the results of modern criticism by appeal to the authority of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament is like a pile of gold-ore, some of such high grade as to be nearly pure gold, some of such low grade that we have to look carefully to find the gold.[2] It was the pure gold to which our Lord directed men's thoughts, not the rough quartz in which it was embedded. If anyone wishes to maintain, in plain disregard of the facts, that all the quartz is gold, he

[1] St. Mark vii. 19.

[2] E.g. The books of Esther, Obadiah, Nahum, Ecclesiastes.

cannot claim the support of the authority of Jesus Christ.

What, then, do we mean when we say that the Old Testament is an inspired book? Let us be clear, first of all, that inspiration does not mean infallibility. God has not been pleased to give us an infallible book, for the result would have been intellectual stagnation, as may be seen by the influence of the Koran on Moslem religion, or indeed, by the influence of the Old Testament on the teaching of the scribes in our Lord's time. Instead, He has given us a collection of writings "human at the red-ripe of the heart," the work of men who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" not because they ceased to be themselves and became mere pens with which God wrote, but because they threw their own personalities into the great struggle for noble and right things. Their names are, for the most part, unknown to us, though some of the prophets were certainly the authors of the writings that bear their names.

Unquestionably, the prophets believed themselves to be inspired men—men to whom there had been given some "oracle of Yahweh" to which they were bound to give utterance. According to the most recent view, trance and ecstasy played a considerable part in prophetic inspiration, and often the prophet had to wait for the word of the Lord to come to him. It is important to remember that

pre-exilic Israel was full of "false" prophets, who made the same claim. For the most part, these prophets seem to have been purveyors of a cheap optimism, like the court prophets who bade Ahab "go up to Ramoth Gilead and prosper." They lacked the moral conviction that shaped the forecasts of the true prophets. Purveyors of cheap optimism are always popular—till they are found out. After the Babylonian exile, in which the warnings of the earlier prophets received their vindication, the easy optimism of the "prophet of smooth things" was discredited, and the prophets who had dared to speak plainly about the sins of the people came to their own. So inspiration was vindicated in experience.

Beside this direct inspiration, there is what Dr. Sanday has called "secondary inspiration," the inspiration that, in varying degree, comes to all men who are trying to give a religious interpretation to the facts of human life. Belief in the Living God as the controlling influence in human affairs is the background of every Old Testament writer, and every man who believes in God is, in some measure, an inspired man. We need not draw a hard-and-fast line between the writers of the Bible and other men, or believe that inspiration ceased when the Canon of Scripture was complete. Only a revelation must be consistent with itself. We may hear the voice of God more clearly as time moves on, but it is the same voice. What

Dr. Sanday says of the Old Testament is true of the whole process of human thought.

" If we take a wider range and look at the diversified products of this individual inspiration and see how they combine together, so as to be no longer detached units but articulated members in a connected and coherent scheme, we must needs feel that there is something more than the individual minds at work ; they are subsumed as it were in the operation of a larger Mind, that central Intelligence which directs and gives unity and purpose to the scattered movements and driftings of men. So much of these movements has been disclosed to us that we can see in part the objects to which they were tending—not of course the ultimate object, but such stepping stones towards that ultimate object as history has revealed to us." [1]

In the last resort there are only two possible views of human history. Either it is an unintelligible record of a blind process " where ignorant armies clash by night " or it is the record of an " increasing purpose," obstructed and hindered by the self-will and stupidity of men, yet moving on like the in-coming tide. Inspiration is God's response to the venture of faith that dares to believe in this increasing purpose, and to give itself to its fulfilment. It is only by taking God into account that we can make sense of life ; just in so far as we do this, we open our minds to the Divine

[1] Sanday: *Inspiration*, p. 402.

Interpreter Who "spake by the prophets" and "hath at the end of these days spoken unto us by His Son," and Who speaks to us still through the intuitions of the poet and the insight of the historian and the investigation of the scientist and the vision of the artist. For every humble-hearted seeker after truth is inspired to the degree to which he surrenders himself to the fulfilment of the purpose of God.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BIBLE OF TO-MORROW

(2) The New Testament

WHEN we pass from the Old Testament to the New, we feel that we are passing into a different atmosphere. There are three things that we recognise at the outset.

1. The Old Testament comes to us out of the dim past, where history fades into legend and figures loom out of the mist and pass into the mist again. But the New Testament stands in the clear light of history. We know, within a few years, the date at which most of the books were written and the kind of world in which they were written. In a sense we have exchanged poetry for prose, for a religion that claims to be based on history cannot treat the truth of fact as unimportant. Yet the poetry is there as well as the prose. Jesus Christ lived out in human life the greatest poem in the world.[1] As we read the gospels we are conscious of the unresponsiveness of prosaic minds to the supreme poetry that makes all action and thought the vesture of Eternal

[1] So Tennyson, in *In Memoriam*:

> And so the Word had breath, and wrought
> With human hands the creed of creeds
> In loveliness of perfect deeds,
> More strong than all poetic thought.

Truth. "How is it," He asks, "that ye do not understand?" Yet though they did not understand, they remembered, and so the poetry of that great life lives on, ever opening up to us "new depths of the Divine." It was because the author of the Fourth Gospel had the heart of a poet that he was able to see more clearly into "the life of things" than other men. But though all this is true, the "princely throne" is built on "humble truth." It is no dream world of poetical imagination through which we are moving. Here are men who really lived, things that really happened.

2. It follows from this that far more is at stake in the criticism of the New Testament than in the criticism of the Old. Yet our study of the New Testament has helped us to recognise that not even in the most vital issues of life has God been pleased to afford mankind infallible guidance. We might have assumed that the records of God's supreme sacrifice for His children would have been protected against all possibility of error and uncertainty. But the almost casual way in which the New Testament came into being is a warning to us that God's ways are not our ways. There are many thousand variations of reading in the text of the New Testament—many of them, it is true, are of minor importance, but all of them are a warning to us not to build up a superstructure of doctrine on prepositions and tenses.

The earliest books of the New Testament are a collection of epistles, survivors almost certainly of a much larger body of letters that have perished. They are not Manuals of Christian Theology, but fragmentary studies in applied Christianity. Turning to the gospels, we find that the closing section of St. Mark's gospel has been lost, that "Q" only survives as a constituent element in the first and third gospels, and that of the "many" who, as St. Luke tells us, "have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us" not a trace remains. Not a single written word of our Lord is recorded, and the record of His teaching reaches us through the medium of fallible human memories. We cannot be surprised that men have been reluctant to admit all this, and have clung to the idea of a miraculous intervention counteracting the possibility of error or misunderstanding. We may believe without any doubt or hesitation that He Who "spake by the prophets" guided the thoughts and enlightened the understandings of those who gathered into written form the memories and impressions of the early disciples of Jesus, and we are sure that our faith does not rest on "cunningly devised fables," but we are bound to recognise that the story has sometimes taken its colour from the human medium through which it has come to us.

3. Yet, looked at as a whole, the verdict of

modern criticism on the New Testament is profoundly reassuring. If some things are less certain than they once seemed to be, the general reliability of the whole has been established on a stronger foundation than before. Of St. Paul's Epistles, only two are now regarded as open to question,[1] and in the case of the only one of the two that really matters—the Epistle to the Ephesians—the grounds of objection are not very convincing. We have gained much by recognising that the Epistle to the Hebrews was not written by St. Paul, or the Book of Revelation by St. John the Apostle. The early date and general reliability of St. Mark's gospel has been vindicated, and the rediscovery of "Q" has given us a second early authority for the teaching of our Lord. The work of Ramsay and Harnack has justified the claim made by St. Luke in the preface of his gospel, and has shown that where he had access to reliable information his records may be trusted. In the gospel that goes by the name of St. Matthew we are obliged to recognise an allegorising tendency, but the early tradition that St. Matthew made a collection of our Lord's sayings may account for the association of his name with this gospel, in which this collection has been incorporated. The greatest unsolved problem of New Testament criticism is that of the authorship and historical value of the Fourth

[1] The Pastoral Epistles constitute a separate problem, about which no general agreement has yet been reached.

Gospel. Present tendencies of thought seem to point to the conclusion that the gospel represents the authentic teaching of St. John, edited and put into circulation by some of his disciples, who add their testimony at the end of the last chapter, which would seem to have been written after the death of the apostle.

How, then, do we stand to-day in regard to the New Testament? Let us begin with St. Paul. From the Reformation period till the early part of the nineteenth century, St. Paul was the controlling influence in English theological thought. But Evangelical theology tended to concentrate on one aspect of the many-sided teaching of the great apostle—the doctrine of justification by faith. The result was a very inadequate interpretation of Pauline teaching. Much has been done in recent years to correct this one-sidedness, and to show the close relationship that exists between the theology of St. Paul and the Johannine theology that has passed down in unbroken succession in the Orthodox Eastern Church, and that has been restored to English thought through the work of such teachers as Coleridge, Maurice and Westcott. St. Paul's interpretation of Christian doctrine is coloured by his rabbinic training and by the circumstances of his own life. The keyword of all his theology is grace—the undeserved favour of God that found its supreme expression in the gift of Jesus Christ. Any attempt to define

the relationship of men to God on any other basis seemed to him to be a blow struck at the heart of Christianity. Some of the controversies in which he was engaged are now mainly of historical interest, but the principle for which he contended is fundamental. But while the foundations of his theology remained unchanged, we can trace the development of his religious teaching as thought and experience widened his outlook. There is a deeper and richer theology in the later epistles than in those of the middle period of St. Paul's career, a clearer recognition of the wide sweep of the Divine purpose, and a less forensic view of the meaning of salvation.

St. Paul was the first leader of the Christian Church to see clearly that the new wine of Christianity could not be contained in the old wine-skins of Judaism. As a world-religion, it must be free to express itself in whatever forms human thought could provide. Yet he never forgets the debt that humanity owes to the Jew," whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises ; whose are the fathers, and of whom is Christ as concerning the flesh." [1] The tragedy of St. Paul's life—indeed was it not the tragedy of Christianity ? —was the " great refusal " of Judaism. Christianity inherited the Jewish Bible, but not the living mind of the Jewish race.

[1] Rom. ix. 4.

"There was a people prepared by national experience, as interpreted to it by saints and prophets, to receive the Lord and His Gospel; with the exception of a very few they failed to respond. The repudiation of the Gospel by Israel was the first mutilation of the Church, and its consequences are past all calculation. How vast a difference it might have made if during the formative age of Christian theology the strongly intellectual influences of the Greek tradition had been balanced by the prophetic note which is most of all characteristic of the Hebraic tradition." [1]

St. Paul's real greatness was shown when he broke with the past in order to advance towards the future, and fought the great battle for Christian liberty against the reactionary forces of Jewish conservatism. He did not live long enough to see the breaking of his other dream—the dream of a world-religion that should flow through all the organised life of a Christian Empire. We can trace the fading of that dream in the first Epistle of St. Peter and its final end in the Book of Revelation, when the Empire, under Domitian, had declared war on the Christian Church.

It is not only as an expression of the mind of the early Church that we read St. Paul's Epistles; we read them also for the insight that they give into the heart of a great Christian man, who had literally suffered the loss of all things for the cause of Jesus Christ. And when we have learned to

[1] Dr. Temple at the Lausanne Conference. Report, p. 488.

recognise the greatness of St. Paul, we understand what it means when we see him prostrate at the feet of Jesus Christ.

We cannot too often remind ourselves that the gospels grew up in a world of Christian thought whose Christology was substantially that of St. Paul. St. Mark and St. Luke were both closely associated with him, and wrote their " memoirs " with full knowledge of what he taught. St. Mark's gospel was probably written within a few years of the death of St. Paul, and St. Luke's not very long after. It has recently been suggested that St. Luke wrote an original gospel—" Proto-Luke," as the critics call it—and that he, or someone else, subsequently incorporated much of St. Mark's gospel, in the same way that J and E were interwoven in the Old Testament. We can, to some extent, reconstruct this Proto-Luke if we take a copy of St. Luke's gospel and rule out all that comes from St. Mark. We shall find that what remains is a fairly complete narrative, which we believe goes back to " Q " as its source. If we do the same thing with St. Matthew's gospel, we discover how the whole framework of the gospel is taken from St. Mark. We are left with a large collection of sayings and parables of our Lord, and a number of disconnected stories, some of which (as I have said) seem to be akin to the Jewish " Midrash "—allegories written around texts of Scripture—parables clothed in the form of

history. Have we gained or lost by this new way of thinking about the gospels? It is a great gain that we are no longer obliged to exercise our ingenuity in the effort to reconcile one gospel with another, or accept every word of the gospels as a literally accurate report of what Jesus said and did. Of this we may be sure, that His life and teaching were greater, not less, than the records of it that have come down to us. I do not think that anyone can read St. Mark's gospel carefully without feeling this. It is only a fragmentary record—about sixty pages in all—yet as incident follows incident the picture of the Master grows and expands, and we feel how much more is behind. Matthew Arnold's lines on Shakespeare are far more true of the Lord of all men :

> For the loftiest hill,
> Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
> Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
> Spares but the cloudy border of his base
> To the foil'd searching of mortality.
>
> And though, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
> Self-school'd, self-scann'd, self-honour'd, self-secure,
> Didst tread on earth unguessed at—better so!
> All pains the immortal spirit must endure,
> All weakness which impairs, all griefs which bow,
> Find their sole speech in that victorious brow.

Once some Greeks came to Philip saying, "Sir, we would see Jesus." If modern study of the gospels has helped us to see Jesus better, we need not

be troubled if here and there some detail has faded into uncertainty.

St. John's gospel is not so much a record of the acts of Jesus as an interpretation of His mind. And the supremely important question is whether it is a true interpretation. Whoever the author may have been, unquestionably he claims to write with direct knowledge, and his express purpose is to vindicate the conviction of the Christian Church that Jesus of Nazareth was none other than the Son of God, the Eternal Word of the Divine Father. There was nothing new in this conviction ; St. Paul and the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews had given expression to it years before. But there was a danger, even then, that the Christ of theology might be separated from the Jesus of history, as the generation of those who had known Him in the days of His flesh passed away. One of the purposes of the writer was to avert this danger.[1] He certainly knew the gospels of St. Mark and St. Luke, and probably some at least of St. Paul's Epistles, but instead of weaving these together into one book, he sets side by side with them the record of his personal experience. He may have had some written notes, compiled long before, or his retentive memory may have served to recall incidents and sayings out of which

[1] Every student of St. John's gospel ought to read Browning's *A Death in the Desert*, which is a masterly study of the significance of the gospel.

he built his gospel. Through long years of brooding thought, facts had ripened into symbols and symbols had become clothed with the concreteness of facts. Miracles were no longer "acts of power," but "signs"—parables in action, through which the laws of the Kingdom were unfolded. Sometimes we are on the solid ground of history, sometimes imagination clothes spiritual truths in narrative form. But always there is one Figure that fills the foreground of the story, as He fills the mind and heart of the writer. It is Jesus of Nazareth, interpreted by the insight that only a great love can give. As Socrates lives for us in Plato's interpretation, or Dr. Johnson in Boswell's narrative, so, but in a far deeper way, Jesus Christ lives in the gospel of the beloved apostle. Such a book as this baffles our critical methods; it stands as its own sufficient vindication. Let us grant, if we will, that the altercations of Jesus with the "Jews" have a harshness and verbal dexterity that reflect the mind of the disciple rather than the mind of the Master; that there are incidents —notably the raising of Lazarus—that cannot easily be fitted into the framework of historical fact; that the discourses of our Lord bear the impress of the style of the writer of the gospel. Let us grant all this, and there remains the unique portrait of One Who spake as never man spake, Whose words are spirit and life still. The mind of the disciple is the instrument, but the music

that breathes through is not his but Christ's. As the prophets claimed to be the inspired interpreters of the mind of God, so the author of the Fourth Gospel claims to be the inspired interpreter of the mind of Jesus Christ. It is in the response of the Christian mind and heart that the claim is vindicated.

"The gospel according to St. John, while it has always had a singular attraction for the cultivated intellect, is also, above all other books in the New Testament, the chosen guide of the unlearned, the poor and suffering members of the Church. It is surely a remarkable tribute to the genius or the inspiration of a religious writer to say that he can command the attention at once of the philosopher and the peasant, the intellectually strong and the intellectually feeble. This is not true of St. Paul, but it is true of St. John." [1]

Three other books of the New Testament are of special importance for the understanding of what Christianity means. The first of these is the First Epistle of St. Peter. There is ample ground for accepting this Epistle as the work of the apostle whose name it bears, and I believe that it was written from Rome immediately after the death of St. Paul to the Churches that had been most closely associated with his missionary labours. Unquestionably, the author had read some at least of St. Paul's Epistles, but this is no argument

[1] Swete: *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, p. 556.

against the Petrine authorship, for St. Peter was not only closely associated with two of St. Paul's colleagues, Mark and Silas, but was also in constant touch with the great apostle of the Gentiles, and it would have been strange indeed if he had never read the letters that were already cherished and exchanged by the Churches to which they had been written. The special value of the Epistle is that it shows how much which some critics have regarded as distinctively Pauline was really the common possession of early Christian thought. A student who wanted to understand the faith and hopes of the Apostolic age might well be recommended to begin with this Epistle, full as it is of echoes from the gospels. It belongs to the moment in the life of the Christian Society when the short peace of the Church was drawing to an end, and the shadows of impending persecution had begun to gather. The nearly contemporary Epistle to the Hebrews has the same note of warning and encouragement. We are leaving the Pauline age behind; the battle of the future will not be against Jewish particularism, but against the forces of a hostile Empire, and a fiery trial will test the faith and courage of Christian men. But "Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that ye should follow His steps,"[1] and men must learn to rejoice if they are called to be partakers of the sufferings of Christ. If we read the Epistle with these facts

[1] 1 St. Peter ii. 21.

in our minds, its significance becomes apparent. St. Peter and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews both strike the note of detachment—we are "pilgrims and strangers on the earth"—and of hope. Both look up to Christ as the intercessor and protector of His Church, and both look forward to His coming as the goal towards which human history is moving.

The Epistle to the Hebrews represents the contribution of Hellenistic thought to the enrichment of Christian theology. Its ruling thought is that earth is the shadow of heaven, and things seen the symbols of Eternal Realities. There is no book in the New Testament that opens up to us greater treasures of thought when we have learned to enter sympathetically into the point of view of the writer. How any student of the New Testament could ever have supposed that that writer was St. Paul remains one of the enigmas of Christian history. As a study of the finality of Christianity the Epistle bears on the subject that we are to consider in the next chapter. Christ in heaven is both the final atonement for human sin and the pledge of an immortal destiny reserved for all who by faith are made one with Him. The authorship of the Epistle will always remain a matter for conjecture, but we may say with assurance that his "spiritual home" was Alexandria and his outlook more nearly akin to that of St. Peter than to that of St. Paul. The other book of the New

Testament with which he has most affinity is the Book of Revelation.

I think it may be said that the Book of Revelation, after suffering many things from many commentators, is at last coming to its own. The recovery, in recent times, of a good many fragments of Jewish Apocalyptic literature, and the more careful study of the relations of the Church to the Empire, have enabled us to read the book not as a collection of enigmas propounded for other ages to solve, but as a living book breaking out of the heart of a Church that stands alone to confront the attacks of the apparently irresistible force of the Empire, with no helper but her Lord. It is the writer's age—it is any age—seen from the standpoint of the Eternal world. The great apostolic leaders of the Church are dead, the first thrill of dawn is over, and instead of the promised coming, Antichrist sits on the Imperial throne, claiming the world's worship. So the author, in his dream, is carried up into the Eternal world, and looks down from heaven on the drama of human history. Two words sum up the theme of the whole book—worship and judgment. The symbolism is gathered from the Hebrew prophets, and perhaps from the older mythology of Babylonia, but all else is subservient to the ruling thought of the victorious Christ, adored in heaven by the cherubim (symbols of the material universe doing homage to its creator), by angels, and by the whole company

of the redeemed; and riding forth to conquest with the armies of heaven. The closing vision of the holy city is a dream of human life as it might be in a sinless world—the Divine ideal, shattered by human self-will, but living still in the mind of God.

There are times—and perhaps our own age is one of them—when a rather shallow optimism is tempted to disregard the dark forces of evil that lurk in the heart of humanity, and dream dreams of a world where

> The common sense of most shall hold a fretful realm in awe,
> And the kindly earth shall slumber, lapt in universal law.[1]

But the drama of human history gives no warrant for this easy optimism. The days may come—and sooner perhaps than we expect—when the Church will be fighting with its back to the wall against the onset of the Antichrist of apostasy and triumphant materialism. It may be, on the other hand, that the Church has already fought its last battle, and that all that remains is the gradual gathering up of the fruits of victory. We cannot tell; but the Book of Revelation is like a warning trumpet still, bidding us to take heed that we do not lay aside our armour in fancied security.

Each of the other books of the New Testament has its own special place in the Christian order.

[1] Tennyson: *Locksley Hall.*

The Epistle of St. James occupies a position in the New Testament somewhat like that of the Book of Proverbs in the Old—it is, in fact, the one book of Christian Wisdom-literature in the Bible. The Epistles of St. John are closely associated with the gospel that bears his name. The Epistle of St. Jude and the Second Epistle of St. Peter seem to belong to a later stage of Christian history than the other books of the New Testament. They are obviously related to each other, but the exact nature of the relationship is not easy to determine. The view that St. Peter was not the author of this Epistle is now hardly challenged. The document is not a forgery, but an attempt to write, in the name of the apostle, such an epistle as he might be supposed to address to the Church of the second century. It lies just on the borderline between the books that the Church included in the Canon and those that were ultimately excluded. It was not till the fourth century that the limits of the New Testament Canon were finally fixed.

The New Testament is a collection of writings by nearly a dozen authors, all, excepting St. Luke, of the Jewish race. We have learned to recognise how each writer's presentation of Christianity is coloured by his environment and personality, and we no longer aim at extracting a "neutral type" of Christianity out of the rich variety of their religious outlook. The bond that holds

them together is their common devotion to Jesus Christ, and their personal experience of His presence by His Spirit in the Church which is His Body. To no one man is it given to realise in personal experience the whole content of Christianity; "we know in part, and we prophesy in part." For our human need, the white light of perfect truth is broken up into the varied colours of human experience. It is better so. But this does not mean that we can use the New Testament as a collection of writings out of which we can pick texts that happen to appeal to us. Many Christian men who boast that their religion is founded on "the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible" have often really constructed for themselves a doctrinal system founded on a few favourite passages rather than on the "general sense" of Holy Scripture. As we need the whole world as the sphere of the Gospel and the whole Church to preach it, so we need the whole Bible to interpret the meaning of it. We may hope that the days are over in which we could fling texts at one another as controversial missiles and miss the many-sidedness of truth in our efforts to prove that the truth that we have found is the whole truth. It was a wise man who first said that most people are right in what they affirm and wrong in what they deny. What is true of all great literature is supremely true of the Bible, that it will only "open its heart" to the sympathetic reader. The first requisite

for the student of the Bible is humility—the humility that is willing to learn. If we go to the New Testament for the confirmation of our own preconceived opinions, we "receive but what we give," and are nothing bettered by our reading. However necessary criticism may be, it is dangerous unless it is carried on in the spirit of humility, because we are judging the New Testament instead of letting it judge us. We cannot treat the New Testament as though it was an interesting collection of ancient literature that we had just discovered. It has nourished the religious life of many generations of humble-hearted men and women who knew nothing of modern criticism, but who found in the Bible an authentic message of God. Without any disrespect to them, we may believe that modern investigation has enabled us to understand the Bible better than they did, but what Longfellow calls "the reverence of unshodden feet" may sometimes bring men nearer to the heart of things than "much learning."

When we say that "the Church is a witness and keeper of Holy Writ," we not only mean that the Church is bound to preserve and make public its title-deeds, we mean also that one of the greatest Catholic possessions of the Christian Society is the Holy Scriptures, which are accepted by the whole Church as the authoritative foundation document of the Christian Faith; the court of appeal in every controversy. Any Society which repudi-

ates, in part or as a whole, the authority of the Bible cuts itself off, by that repudiation, from the Christian Church. And we mean also that the Church keeps and carries on the witness of all the generations of the children of God. Tradition does not mean a secret knowledge handed down in an inner circle, like the *Gnosis* of the Gnostics. Christianity brought the truth of God out of the dim half-light of shrouded temples into the clear daylight, and made a way of holiness for humanity on which the unclean might not enter, but along which the wayfaring man, though accounted a fool in human judgment, might walk safely. If we meet a man who tells us that he cannot be bothered to read Shakespeare because he "finds nothing in it," it is not our estimate of Shakespeare, but our estimate of the speaker, that is affected by his confession. *Securus judicat orbis terrarum*—which means that the considered judgment of mankind is not lightly to be set aside.

The second requisite for the study of the Bible is willingness to take trouble. We have no right to expect that a collection of literature that deals with the deepest problems of human life will deliver its message to the merely casual reader. The view that it is the business of the clergy to study the Bible and tell the people what they are to believe is not the view of the Church of England, which provides that the Holy Scriptures shall be read to the people in all its churches twice every

day.[1] The advance in general education in England affords an opportunity for encouraging a more intelligent study of the Bible, and the tentative efforts that are being made to organise Adult Tutorial Classes for Bible Study are meeting with an encouraging measure of success.

There is a third requisite that must not be forgotten. The New Testament is a textbook of applied Christianity. A textbook of applied science can only be understood by a student who "does" the experiments recommended in the book. So the moral and spiritual teaching of the New Testament finds its verification in experience. "If any man will do . . . he shall know."[2] The man who reads the Bible with no intention of making it his "rule of life" will gain much by his reading, but he will not gain the best things.

Before we pass from the New Testament, something must be said about the question of miracles. In this matter we have been a little too eager to jettison our cargo in deference to the scientific dogma of the uniformity of nature. For it would appear that the matter is not quite so simple. Our little friend the atom seems to behave in unaccountable ways, and a kind of rudimentary

[1] It is not the fault of the clergy that the people refuse to come to these daily readings of the Bible, but perhaps if we held our daily services at more convenient times the laity might resume the habit of attendance.

[2] St. John vii. 17.

freedom appears to belong to the structure of the physical world. Perhaps there is a deeper truth than he understood in St. Paul's words that " where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The significance of miracle lies in its assertion of the supremacy of the spiritual over the material, and if (as seems probable) this supremacy comes to be recognised more clearly as science penetrates further into the heart of things, the *a priori* objection to miracle will tend to disappear. On the other hand, the Christianity of to-morrow may come back more nearly to the point of view of the early Church, which regarded the miracles of the gospels not as abnormal intrusions into the orderly life of the world, but rather as normal expressions of the supremacy of a humanity indwelt by the Spirit of God. We do not believe that Jesus was the Son of God because He worked miracles, but we believe that because He was the Son of God, He could, when He so willed, vindicate the supremacy of the spiritual order in the sphere of human life. As acts of power, His miracles gave to His disciples confidence in His ability to provide for and protect them ; as acts of mercy, they were the expression of His compassion for the sufferings and sorrows of men ; as signs—acted parables—they revealed the laws of His Kingdom. We are not committed to the belief that every miracle recorded in the gospels happened in exactly the way in which it was handed down in

the recollection of the disciples, but any attempt to eliminate the miraculous from the gospels must, in the end, discredit the whole story. The Christianity of to-morrow will be obliged to choose between the belief that Jesus did, on occasion, exercise powers such as are not given to men, and the surrender of all confidence in the veracity of the records on which we depend for our knowledge of Him.

To call the Resurrection a miracle is to do much less than justice to its significance. About this I have said something already [1] and I need only add that it is the fact of the Resurrection, not any particular theory as to the mode of it, to which we are committed. There are, admittedly, discrepancies in the accounts that cannot easily be reconciled, but it is quite certain that the little body of disciples became convinced that Jesus Christ was alive in the full vigour of a perfected humanity. We need not believe, as many Christians seem to do, that Jesus lingered on earth for forty days, and then passed into the Eternal World. For a little while He permitted His disciples to speak with Him, and to touch Him under conditions of human life—speaking in imperfect human language we may say that He " came back to them " —and the Ascension was the close of the last of these revisits. But the risen Lord was in heaven, and if Christian thought associates His exaltation

[1] See p. 53.

with the Feast of the Ascension, is it not rather as though we thought of His coronation after the pattern of human kingship ? It is not his coronation that makes a man a king ; it is the ceremonial consecration of a status on which he has already entered. So Jesus passed from the cross to the throne, from the temporal to the eternal, at His Resurrection. If old relationships were renewed for a little while, it was only in order that His disciples might be prepared for the new relationship, based not on the coming down of the eternal to the temporal, but on the lifting up of the temporal to the eternal.

The Virgin-birth also stands apart from the other miracles of the gospels. We could wish that this sacred mystery had been left in the reverent obscurity in which the early Church enfolded it. We can believe in the fact of the Incarnation without needing to know by what means it pleased God to provide the vesture of humanity in which the Word became flesh. It may be right to hold that a definite denial of the Virgin-birth is inconsistent with right respect for Christian tradition, but a reverent agnosticism is not inconsistent with complete loyalty to the essential truths of the Christian Faith. Belief in the Incarnation does not depend on belief in the Virgin-birth, but when we have accepted the truth that it was the very Word of God Who entered human life by the gateway of birth, we may feel that in holding to the

belief that a unique act of God brought into being a unique Personality, the Church has not mistaken legend for the truth. In its reaction from mediæval exaggeration, Protestantism has generally given far less honour than is her due to the Mother whose sacred task has lifted all motherhood to a new honour. Her self-surrender to the Divine call is the culmination of the age-long process that began with the call and promise to Abraham, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." But it was not virginity, but motherhood that was consecrated with that new blessedness that has sent the Magnificat ringing down all Christian history as the triumph song of life's most sacred experience.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FINALITY OF CHRISTIANITY

THE question of St. John the Baptist, "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" is the great question of our own age in the sphere of religion. Christianity stands or falls by its claim to be a final and universal religion, which has the right to supersede all other religions in virtue of its higher Divine sanction. Can this claim be made good? It is challenged in three directions.

1. Many minds are attracted to the idea of a syncretic [1] religion in which the best of all existing religions shall be blended together. All religions, men say, are the efforts of men to reach ultimate truth. Why not join forces and pursue the quest together? This is rather what Gnosticism tried to do in the second century. But Christianity cannot amalgamate with any other religion without losing its distinctive character and value. It can recognise the element of truth that there is in other religions, and can learn to know itself better in trying to understand them, but it claims to be God's reply to the consciousness of human need that finds expression in all other religions.

[1] Blunt defines syncretism as "any well-meaning, but weak attempt to combine in one system opposite and contradictory theological opinions."

"Whom, therefore, ye ignorantly worship, Him declare we unto you." [1]

In its attitude towards non-Christian religions, Christian thought in modern times has passed through two stages. The first of these is represented by Bishop Heber's lines about "the heathen in his blindness" who "bows down to wood and stone." Outside the area of Christianity lay nothing but heathen darkness and ignorance of God. A more adequate knowledge of non-Christian religions brought about a reaction. It was no longer possible to deny that these religions were the expression, however inadequately given, of a real spiritual experience. Was not the difference between Christianity and these religions, then, one of degree rather than of kind? There are many paths that lead to God, and if Christianity is the best, is it, after all, only *primus inter pares*, differing in no essential way from all the others that men have cut through the jungle of human ignorance? This was the second stage, and from this we are now passing into a third. It is becoming clear that Christianity is the only possible world-religion. But the only claim of Christianity to be a world-religion lies in its uniqueness. In any syncretic religion, this uniqueness would necessarily disappear. But is not Christianity itself a syncretic religion that has grown by appropriating elements from other religions? Thus Dr. Rashdall writes,

[1] Acts xvii. 23.

"This capacity of absorbing into itself elements of spiritual life which were originally independent of it is not a defect of historical Christianity, but one of its qualifications for being accepted by the modern world as a universal, an absolute and final religion." [1]

But I do not think that this is a true account of the matter. Christian theology is not like a gardener who has enriched his garden by looting flowers from those of his neighbours, but like a gardener who has learned from the study of his neighbours' gardens to recognise the unexpected richness of his own. The evolution of Christian theology has not been due to the assimilation of alien elements from outside, but to the conviction that in Christ all truth that man could "grasp and use" has been revealed. Christianity had no need to go to Neo-Platonism for its doctrine of Divine Immanence, or to the Mystery Religions for its doctrine of redemption through sacrifice, except in so far as its contact with these enabled it to realise more clearly the riches in its own storehouse.

A syncretic religion can never have the organic character that belongs to Christianity. Christian truth "holds together." We cannot

> Shatter it to bits, and then
> Remould it nearer to our heart's desire.

[1] Rashdall: *Philosophy and Religion*, p. 165.

Reconstructed Christianity is a dead thing; at best a religious philosophy out of relation with life, at worst a parody not worth preserving. A man may disbelieve in Christianity; but if he tries to take bits out of it to build a new religion, he will find that he has turned a living truth into a dead "thing of shreds and patches."

2. The "absolute validity" of Christianity is also challenged on the ground that Christianity has become the religion of the European peoples, and can never be adapted to the needs of other races. The most distinguished exponent of this view is the great German theologian Troeltsch. Let me quote a few sentences from his last book, *Christian Thought*:

"Christianity is indissolubly bound up with elements of the ancient and modern civilisations of Europe. From being a Jewish sect, Christianity has become the religion of all Europe. It stands or falls with European civilisation, whilst, on its own part, it has entirely lost its Oriental character and has become hellenised and westernised. Our European conceptions of personality and its eternal divine right, and of progress towards a kingdom of the spirit and of God, our enormous capacity for expansion and for the inter-connection of spiritual and temporal, our whole social order, our science, our art—all these rest, whether we know it or not, whether we like it or not, upon the basis of this de-orientalised Christianity."

" This (experience of Christianity) is undoubtedly the criterion of its validity, but be it noted only of its validity *for us*. It is God's countenance as revealed to us ; it is the way in which, being what we are, we receive and react to the revelation of God. It is binding upon us, and it brings us deliverance. It is final and unconditional for us, because we have nothing else, and because in what we have we can recognise the accents of the divine voice."

" But this does not preclude the possibility that other racial groups, living under entirely different conditions, may experience their contact with the Divine Life in quite a different way, and may themselves also possess a religion which has grown up with them, and from which they cannot sever themselves so long as they remain what they are. And they may quite sincerely regard this as absolutely valid for them, and give expression to this absolute validity according to the demands of their own religious feeling."

The question raised by this view is absolutely fundamental. If it is true, our Missions are a gross impertinence, and our only contribution to world-religion should be to try to help the Buddhist to be a better Buddhist, and the Mohammedan to be a more faithful follower of the prophet. Our answer must be that converts from other religions have been convinced that Christianity gave them something that they could not find in their old

beliefs ; we must consider presently what this something is.

3. A third challenge comes from the new forms of religion that have, in recent years, won many adherents, especially in America. Christian Science, Higher Thought and other kindred forms of organised religion are all based, not on a denial of Christianity, but on the claim to climb through Christianity to something higher. We dare not deny that these new religions have fostered the spiritual life of many who, without them, would probably have sunk to a merely material view of life. We are bound to ask whether they are the expression of aspects of truth that the Christian Church has allowed to fall too much into the background; but if we accept them as a substitute for Christianity, we surrender its claim to "absolute validity." Spiritualism stands in a rather different category. We have no right to deny to science its right to investigate all phenomena, so long as the investigation is carried out in the true scientific spirit. But when the cult of the departed is offered to us as a new religion, we can only meet it with uncompromising opposition.

The claim to finality of any religion must be judged by its idea of God, its conception of the meaning of the world, and by the quality of the life that it develops in its adherents. Let us apply these tests to Christianity.

1. Christianity begins with God. The true

purpose of all being is the glory of God. What we call the transcendence of God was the great truth that Christianity took over from its Jewish ancestry. Nothing is necessary to God except Himself; His "Otherness" in relation to the universe is complete. If we believe in the Divine Immanence this does not mean that God is entangled in the life of the universe. Immanence means limitation, and every act of Divine self-limitation is an act of grace. So Christianity can make no terms with Pantheism in any of its forms. It conceives of God as a Personal Being "of infinite power, wisdom and goodness." In its conception of the Ultimate Reality as Personal, it separates itself from the great religions of the East. Personality is the highest category that we know, and a religion that claims finality cannot think of God as less than the highest. There is a point at which every religion must become agnostic, for we can only know God up to the limit that our human faculties can reach; but we believe that we can know Him truly, however imperfect our knowledge may be.

Of this Personal God we say that He is a Being of infinite power, wisdom and goodness. A universe of order implies some ultimate power, and polytheism was doomed as soon as men began to think intelligently about religion. But is infinite power reconcilable with human freewill? Yes, if we think of God not as a blind force, but as

a loving Father. The same question arises in regard to infinite wisdom. If God wills the perfect good of all His creatures, up to the limit of their capacity, that will must ultimately be fulfilled. But infinite wisdom will achieve its purpose not along some predetermined line, but in that freedom of action that belongs to the realm of the Spirit. Even in human affairs coercion is a confession of failure. Infinite goodness brings us to the heart of Christianity. The infinite goodness of God was the final revelation that a few great souls had dared to believe, and that became "current coin"[1] when Jesus Christ lived out a Divine Life under human conditions.

There was a truth in the old idea that a man who saw the face of God must die. The man who gazes at the sun in its unclouded glory is dazzled and blinded, and can see nothing clearly, but when a light cloud is drawn across the sky, he can see the sun. So the Incarnation both concealed and revealed God. The humanity of Jesus Christ was the cloud drawn across the face of God that we might see Him more clearly through the cloud than in His unveiled splendour. And what the cloud revealed was the goodness of God. So Christianity is the one religion that has trans-

[1] Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
We yield all blessings to the name
Of Him that made them current coin.
Tennyson: *In Memoriam.*

formed belief in the infinite goodness of God from a splendid guess to an assured conviction. A Christian man could more easily doubt the fact of his own existence than he could doubt the infinite goodness of God.

> What lacks then of perfection fit for God,
> But just the instance that this tale supplies
> Of love without a limit ? So is strength,
> So is intelligence ; let love be so,
> Unlimited in its self-sacrifice,
> Then is the tale true and God shows complete.[1]

By presenting the highest idea of God that our human minds can grasp Christianity opens to men a vista of progress in the knowledge of God such as no other religion can give. It means the progressive realisation in human experience of the truth wrought out at Bethlehem and Nazareth and Calvary. So Christian theology claims to rest not on man's feelings, but on God's facts. " The Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory." Till we have exhausted the significance of the revelation of God that came in Jesus Christ, we need no fresh revelation. And that will never be.

2. The second test of the finality of a religion is its view of the meaning of the world. In this, the realism of Christianity is its strength. In the realm of ultimate reality, sin and sorrow and disease and death have no place, but as factors in

[1] Browning: *The Ring and the Book.*

the making or marring of souls they are realities in our present experience. To deny their reality (in this sense) is to reduce all life to an illusion. Christianity has never tried to explain away sin. It has faced the whole fact.

> 'Tis the faith that launched point-blank her dart
> At the head of a lie—taught Original Sin,
> The Corruption of Man's Heart.[1]

Sorrow and death may be the friends of man, but sin and disease are enemies that he must fight. The Christian man is not called to live in a world of beautiful illusions; he is called to face the dismal facts of a world that has gone astray. The problem of evil is probably insoluble, but nothing is gained by pretending that it does not exist. Evil must exist by God's permission, though not by God's appointment. It has no rightful place in God's world. No other religion gives the same incentive to moral effort as the religion that ranges God definitely on the side of good.

"I cannot explain the darkness. I can only defy it and seek to destroy it, and I know that in some measure it can be destroyed. I do not know anything about it. I cannot say why or whence it comes. I only know that God did not make it. I know that the Word is not in it, nor is it in the Word. There is no reason and no purpose in it. Perhaps that is why it cannot be

[1] Browning: *Gold Hair.*

explained. You cannot reason about the unreasonable or explain the irrational. If you can make sense out of nonsense it never was nonsense. Evil is nonsense. It is irrational and mad. That is the very essence of it. It has no ultimate objective existence because it was not made by God through the Word, through Whom all things came into being, and apart from Whom not one single thing came into being which is of the nature of reality. Evil has no substance because it has no absolute value. If you submit to evil you are wasting your time. It is a fraud." [1]

This is the spirit in which Christian men are called to declare war on evil—not by denying that it exists, but by denying that it has any right to exist in God's universe.

And as Christianity has declared war on sin, so it has declared war on disease, which is the physical counterpart of sin. The one Christian element in Christian Science is its repudiation of the idea that we ought to face disease with resignation. Disease, like sin, is here by God's permission, but His gift to men is not disease, but health. This does not mean that we are to accept the false idea that ill-health is a sign of Divine displeasure, but it does mean that the Christian Church is called to pray and work for health as it prays and works for holiness.

Yet Christianity is equally realistic in facing the

[1] Studdert Kennedy : *The Word and the Work*, p. 37.

fact of suffering. It is one of the paradoxes of our religion that we are pledged to relieve suffering, and yet we are also pledged to accept it and to rejoice in it when it comes to us as the cost of service. Christianity keeps the middle path between cowardly shrinking from suffering and morbid desire for it. There is all the difference in the world between the self-mutilation of the Indian devotee, or the hair shirt and scourge of the mediæval monk, and the courage of Him Who "endured the cross, despising the shame." Pain is neither an illusion nor a punishment, but a test and a challenge.

> I can believe this dread machinery
> Of sin and sorrow, would confound me else,
> Devised—all pain at most expenditure
> Of pain by Who devised pain—to evolve,
> By new machinery in counterpart,
> The moral qualities of man—how else ?
> To make him love in turn and be beloved,
> Creative and self-sacrificing, too,
> And thus eventually God-like.
>
> Enable man to wring, from out all pain,
> All pleasure for a common heritage,
> For ever.[1]

3. All the great religions of the world are religions of redemption, for no religion that does not offer a Way of Salvation can meet the deepest needs of human life. Does Christianity offer the highest and most effective way of salvation ? It asserts

[1] Browning: *The Ring and the Book.*

that salvation is an act of God, not an achievement of man.

> Not the labours of my hands
> Can fulfil Thy law's demands,
> Could my zeal no respite know,
> Could my tears for ever flow,
> All for sin could not atone,
> Thou must save, and Thou alone.

So Christianity rests man's destiny on the firm rock of God's grace, not on the shifting sands of man's merit. Man has the dreadful power of destroying himself by turning from the grace of God, but God has fore-ordained no man to destruction. There is no room for Divine grace in the Karma of Buddhism, or the determinism of Mohammedanism. And out of the grace of God comes the grace of man. It is a simple matter of fact that Christianity is the only religion in the world that has fostered philanthropic effort, not as a means of acquiring merit, but as the natural expression of our human response to the grace of God. St. Paul was a pioneer of social revolution when he wrote " We that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak and not to please ourselves ; for even Christ pleased not Himself." Nietzsche was right when he called the morality of Christianity " slave morality," for it is the morality of Him Who took upon Himself the form of a bondservant that every bondservant might arise a freeman.

A special characteristic of the Christian idea of salvation is that it is essentially social. There is a pathetic solitariness about the ideals of salvation of the non-Christian religions. Christianity is like them in demanding detachment from the world, but unlike them in offering to men a way of salvation that is also a way of fellowship. Christianity is fundamentally sacramental because it is fundamentally social, for sacraments belong to the life of a society, and are its protection against the danger of undervaluing the ordinary man, or allowing the ordinary man to undervalue himself. The fellowship of the Christian society does not depend on the emotions that we feel together, but on the acts that we do together, as the witness of our common dependence on the grace of God. We dare not challenge the claims of the Christian mystics to a direct intuition of God, but normal Christian experience is on a different but not necessarily a lower level. The man who finds the grace of God along the highway of life, where men can meet and march together, is perhaps more safely within the Kingdom of God than the man who is in solitary quest of the Beatific Vision.

Christian salvation does not mean merely a change of status. The mistake of the doctrine of justification by faith, as taught in some Christian schools of thought, is that it ends the story just where it ought to begin. The ideal that Christianity sets before men is the highest that human thought

can conceive—that we should be "partakers of the divine nature." Salvation is more than deliverance from sin; much more than the mere remission of penalty; it is the perfecting of the human ego by lifting it up into fellowship with the Eternal Reality which is Eternal Love. We are not perfect yet—there are many stages still on our journey—but it is not by its achievements but by its aspirations that human life has value with God.

> All I could never be,
> All men ignored in me,
> That I was worth to God.[1]

Human life on earth is the opportunity for the ego to take the right direction, to "lay hold on eternal life," to "let the dead past bury its dead" and join the great pilgrimage that Jesus Christ is leading home to the Father.

When men understand this, there is only one objection that they can make, that it is too good to be true. Mr. Chesterton has said that Christianity has been found difficult, and has therefore never been tried. It would be equally true to say that it has been found hard to believe, and so has been diluted by admixture till it has become credible —and ineffective.

And it has too often lost its note of challenge —its demand that every man shall respond to the

[1] Browning: *Rabbi Ben Ezra.*

7 33 99

grace of God. For it is not the story of how man has gone in search of God that Christianity has to tell, but the far more wonderful story of how God has gone in search of man.[1] Consciously or unconsciously, men have always tried to escape from God, that they may make for themselves gods in their image, after their likeness. For this is the essence of idolatry. Yet, when God made Himself in the image of man, He was "despised and rejected of men"; and He is still despised and rejected by "the sensual and the proud"; but humility and need are still the doorways through which He enters that He may remake man in His image. Is Christianity too good to be true? May we not answer that it is too good not to be true?

Yet Christianity has still to meet the challenge of the man who says that, however beautiful it may be in theory, in practice it has failed.

> How do the Christians here deport them, keep
> Their robes of white unspotted from the world?

The pragmatic test is a perfectly fair one—indeed, it was the test that our Lord invited men to apply. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Our first reply to the challenge is to point to one remarkable fact about Christianity, its recuperative power. The student of history constantly finds himself apparently at the death-bed of Christianity, but

[1] See Francis Thompson's *The Hound of Heaven.*

while he is preparing to write its obituary notice it has arisen from its bed of sickness and is reclaiming its inheritance. I believe that we are living at the beginning of one of these periods of revival. Even our controversies, wasteful as they are, are a sign of life, for men do not contend about things about which they do not care. In the middle of the nineteenth century Matthew Arnold wrote the familiar lines :

> The tide of faith
> Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
> Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
> But now I only hear
> Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
> Retreating, to the breath
> Of the night wind, down the vast edges drear
> And naked shingles of the world.[1]

Could he have held the same view to-day ? We need not wonder if the returning tide brings with it the floating seaweed of superstition and other strange refuse of human thought, nor need we be surprised that men who have claimed the foreshore for themselves should be eager to build embankments to hold back the tide.

Is this too optimistic a view ? I believe the real problem of the near future is not whether Christianity will revive, but whether the wine-skins of our Church organisations can hold the new wine that has come to us through the scientific

[1] Matthew Arnold: *Dover Beach.*

renaissance of the last hundred years. The renaissance of the sixteenth century shattered the old wineskins of the mediæval Church, and ever since men have been trying to make new wineskins. Now they, in their turn, threaten to break under the pressure of the new wine. The desire for reunion has awakened in part through the recognition of this danger. Christianity cannot be an effective force in the world of men unless its inward and spiritual grace can find expression in outward and visible form; and, on the other hand, the Christian Society cannot meet human need unless it is able to find room for new aspects of truth. There must be wine and wineskins.

Then we go on to deny that Christianity does not work. In a nominally Christian country like our own, the line of division between Christian and non-Christian becomes blurred, and the camp followers of the Christian army wear its uniform without sharing its *esprit de corps*. But what of the army itself? An age that has learned to think in terms of evolution has no right to demand the finished product of a process that is still in its infancy. One of the most significant facts about the Christian man is that he is not satisfied with himself. He is not a "finished and finite clod, untroubled by a spark." He is only a child, or at most an adolescent, in the Kingdom of God, with "somewhat to cast off, somewhat to become." The one valid impeachment of Christianity would

be that it conceived of life as static, and that is just what it does not do. It is its glory that it takes the ordinary man with his animal ancestry and self-centred egoism and sets him on the road that leads to God. He may not have travelled far along that road before he turns the corner and is lost to sight, but we can still " greet the unseen with a cheer," for he is travelling, not alone, but with a great company and Christ is guiding the march. Our judgments on one another are always superficial, for we see only the surface of life, not the fruit that is ripening underneath. We see one another as decaying individuals, it is only God Who sees us as persons in the making. It is reported of Jesus Christ that after pronouncing a great eulogy on St. John the Baptist, He added the words, " He that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he." The meanest organism in a new order of being is greater than the highest product of an order that is passing away, for value is measured not by what we are, but by what we are capable of becoming. So we claim that Christianity is the final religion because it conceives of the Christian life as an infinite progress towards an infinite goal, and does not " thrust in time eternity's concern," or lose its optimism because God takes time to make saints.

" The claims of Christianity as an absolute religion are unique. It claims to bring the per-

fection no less than the redemption of finite being. It claims to bring a perfect unity of the whole sum without destroying the personality of each man. It claims to deal with all that is external as well as with all that is internal, with matter as well as spirit, with the physical universe as well as with the moral universe. It claims to realise a re-creation co-extensive with creation. It claims to present Him Who was the Maker of the world as the Heir of all things, and entering on His inheritance. It claims to complete the circle of existence, and to show how all things came from God and go to God." [1]

[1] Westcott: *The Gospel of Life*, p. 248.

CHAPTER XV

A LAST WORD

I MEANT to close this book with the discussion on the finality of Christianity, but I am conscious that the reader who has patiently accompanied me through the preceding pages may be left with a sense of grievance. He may complain that I have not told him what the Christianity of to-morrow will be. To this charge I must plead guilty. What I have tried to do has been to show the lines along which, as it seems to me, Christian thought is moving under the stimulus of the new knowledge that science has brought to us. I believe that this new knowledge has come from God, and constitutes a fresh revelation of the method of the Divine activity in the time-space order. I believe that Christianity can not only live and grow in this new world of thought and experience, but that it can find in it what early Christianity found in Greek Philosophy—fresh light on its own content and meaning.

Every Christian man is helping to make the Christianity of to-morrow, just in so far as he is trying, in humble confidence, to follow the impulse of the Spirit of God. Intellectually, as well as spiritually, we are called to a splendid adventure of faith. In other days, great men have led the advance of Christian thought, and gathered the

harvest of new truth into the garners of the Christian Church. But I think the restatement of religious truths in terms of modern thought is more likely to be the task of many men, each contributing something to the retranslation of eternal truth into the language of the new age. Perhaps we are passing into the age that Joel foretold, when "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions, and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My spirit." [1]

1. I think the first characteristic of the Christianity of to-morrow will be the recovery of a truer sense of proportion. It will concentrate on the essentials of the Faith, not on secondary matters that belong to the debris of our ecclesiastical past. I cannot believe that there is any future before an Evangelicalism that regards the particular place where the celebrant stands at Holy Communion as the "acid test" of the loyalty of its clergy; or for the Anglo-Catholicism that is prepared practically to excommunicate many thousand faithful men and women rather than relax the rigidity of its adherence to the ancient custom of fasting communion; or for the Fundamentalism that challenges all the conclusions of science in the interest of a preconceived theory as to the method of Divine revelation. A loss of the sense

[1] Joel ii. 28.

of proportion is one of the greatest dangers to which the ecclesiastical mind is subject. It was the sin that Jesus Christ denounced in the Pharisees, and from which He gave men the way of deliverance when He founded His religion on personal allegiance to a living Person, not to an ecclesiastical system. When the Church has re-enthroned Jesus Christ as the Lord of its life and the Captain of its service, the lesser matters of the law will fall into their right place.

2. The second great task of the Christianity of to-morrow will be to restore the right relationship between doctrine and life. Every minister who is exercising any pastoral office knows that this is the real problem with which he has to deal. There is little danger of our congregations lapsing into Manichæism or Nestorianism; they are, for the most part, pathetically anxious to remain within the safe shelter of Orthodoxy, where they have every right to be. It is only among a small section that heresy is regarded as the evidence of intellectual superiority. But to-day, as always, faith and works are not "bells of full accord." As I have already said, we have no right to expect an impossible standard of virtue from men and women who are still in their spiritual childhood; but the paltry squabbles, the petty jealousies, the ungenerous suspicions, that vex the soul of many a parish priest are a measure of the failure of Christian men and women to "grow up in all

things unto Him Who is the Head, even Christ." I think one cause of these roots of bitterness which, springing up, trouble us, is the static view of the Christian life. We have not taught men the glory of going on, the inspiration of the ideal presented in our Anglican Confirmation service, that we should "daily increase in God's Holy Spirit more and more." In a word, it is arrested development with which we have to deal. I believe that what we need is to grasp the full significance of the truth that man exists for the purpose of God, not God for the purpose of man.

> Man is not God but hath God's end to serve,
> A master to obey, a course to take,
> Somewhat to cast off, somewhat to become.[1]

Our religion has been too anthropocentric, too exclusively occupied with human needs and claims ; we need a Christocentric religion to save us from ourselves. So the Christianity of to-morrow will, I think, set up a bolder claim to the Lordship of Jesus Christ over all life. This does not mean that the Church, in its corporate capacity, will claim the right to control politics and industry and social life ; it means that every Christian man will recognise that he must stand for Christian ideals in every department of life, and face the cost, if need be, of faithfulness to his allegiance.

[1] Browning : *A Death in the Desert.*

It is no easy task to which we are being called. It is often said that business life cannot, under the conditions of the modern world, be conducted on Christian principles, and to clear the Augean stable of contemporary literature is a Herculean labour. How can the party politician or the leader of modern society "keep himself unspotted from the world"? Is Christianity an impracticable ideal in modern life? This is the question that men are asking, and the Christian Church is bound to find the answer. The realisation of the urgency of the issue will have a bracing effect on Christian thought. We shall come to see more clearly that the only creed that can save the world is the creed that makes character, and shows itself in conduct. The great badge and sign of Christian character is magnanimity—the large-heartedness that is incapable of meanness or envy; that will suffer injury or injustice rather than inflict it; that "seeketh not its own, is not provoked," that "suffereth long and is kind." It is because there are magnanimous men and women in the world that our human institutions hold together, and it is the infinite magnanimity of God that lies at the heart of the Christian gospel.

3. One of the tasks of the Christianity of to-morrow will be, I think, to reassert the truth of personal immortality. As I have tried to show, the Christian doctrine of immortality means much more than the survival of the individual. It means

the fulfilment of a Divine purpose that reaches on into the eternal order. Modern thought has hardly yet reached beyond the pagan idea of the hereafter as a shadow world in which man exchanges the "warm precincts of the cheerful day" for a grey existence without hope or joy. Even Christian thought often seems to regard death as the supreme disaster, while it uses the language of hope. Our funeral ceremonies in England are still steeped in pagan associations, from which they are only slowly becoming disentangled. Yet it is quite certain that Christianity stands or falls by its belief that a life of gladness and service lies beyond the gateway of death for all who have surrendered themselves to the purpose of God. The incurable other-worldliness of Christianity is the secret of its strength. The widening of human experience and the tremendous development of material resources through the discoveries of science have concentrated men's thoughts and aspirations on the present; but this phase will not last, and when men ask what is beyond, there must be no uncertain sound in the Church's answer. It is vain to imagine that we can ever reimpose the fantastic symbolism of mediæval purgatorial teaching on the modern world, or reveal the things that Jesus Christ left untold. But we can say that human life only "makes sense" if we think of it as one stage in a process of soul-evolution that goes on, and that

if we exist for the purpose of God, that purpose cannot be frustrated by death. And we can say that eternal life is not a state of being on which we enter first at death, but is that condition of fellowship with God through Christ on which the ego or self may enter even while it is still anchored to the body.

4. The other special task that lies before the Christianity of to-morrow is the reassertion of the meaning of revelation. All human knowledge is, ultimately, knowledge about God, but to know God means much more than knowing about God. It is only by sympathetic insight that we ever learn to know one another, and it is only when our minds and hearts are in tune with God that we can know Him as He desires to be known. Sin includes everything in our lives that hinders this knowledge, by which human life is transformed as we see it with eyes touched to new insight by the Hand of God :

> How soon all worldly wrong would be repaired !
> I think how I should view the earth and skies
> And sea, when once again my brow was bared
> After thy healing, with such different eyes.[1]

" This is life eternal, that they should know Thee, the only true God, and Him Whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ." But only the pure in heart

[1] Browning : *The Guardian Angel.*

can see God, and purity of heart is God's gift, not man's achievement. So Christian thought must probe more deeply than it has yet done into the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, which means the truth of Jesus Christ's continued activity in the world of men through His Spirit—the Will of God bringing the wills of men into subjection to His purpose, " working in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Perhaps modern psychology, when it has escaped from its over-emphasis on the abnormal, and its grotesque exaggeration of the influence of the sex emotion, may help us to understand how the subconscious self may become, not the receptacle of the debris of conscious life, but the inner shrine where God cleanses the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit. The only religion that is of any value to men to-day is a religion that can transform human character and develop in ordinary men and women a " tendency to God " that will enlist emotion and thought on the side of holiness. It is not a good sign that in so many of our Churches conversion has come to be associated with " missions " and other special efforts, for conversion is simply the right adjustment of the compass-needle of our lives by the magnetic power of a devotion that is renewed in every act of worship. The magnetic pole of the Christian life is Jesus Christ, and the power that keeps its compass-needle steadily pointing towards Him is the power

of the Holy Spirit. There is no dynamic power in Christianity that has not staked its very existence on its belief in the Holy Spirit. Without this it will be timid when it ought to be courageous, bewildered when it ought to understand, stagnant when it ought to be alive. Belief in the Holy Spirit means that the Christian Society is called to dare great adventures and take tremendous risks. Only when we essay the impossible do we give God a chance ; only when we achieve the impossible do we prove that the Holy Spirit is not a theological proposition but a Living Reality. Long ago, a little company of men and women, with no resources of learning or money or organisation, set out to conquer the world because they believed in the Holy Spirit. It is not learning or wealth or organisation that will enable the Christian Church to conquer the world to-day, but the same belief in the Holy Spirit. If we could silence our ecclesiastical rivalries, our counsels of expediency, our clamour for money, we might " hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches " more clearly than we hear it to-day.

In the task that lies before it, Christianity has " great allies." The first of these is the consciousness of need that flows as an undercurrent through contemporary life and thought. The achievements of science, the growth of material well-being, the increasing facilities for amusement and self-culture, have left the deepest needs of human life unsatisfied, and the characteristic note of modern

literature is a pessimism that is often cynical and sometimes angry. What is the matter with the world? Is it not just this, that men can neither understand nor enjoy life apart from God? The "kings of modern thought" are certainly not "dumb," but vociferous; but they "wait to see the future come" with no utopian illusions as to what it will bring. If Christianity has any way of gladness and strength to offer, now is the time to preach it with convincing energy. Throughout the world, the younger generation is distrustful of pretence and conventions, but is ready to respond to a call that has in it the note of clear conviction.

A second ally is the spread of education. There are still some people who deplore the growth of education, and look back with envy to the ages of faith—and of ignorance. But we ought to rejoice in all that makes the minds of men more capable of understanding.

A man who can read the Bible for himself has opened up an avenue through which God can speak to him. A man who has been taught to think (and an education that has not taught men to think has failed of its purpose) may have to face doubts and problems of which simple-hearted piety knows nothing, but he has something to bring to the service of Christ that will make his life of more value. Christianity is a synthesis of thought and feeling and action. True education will train a man to think and feel, and it is the business of

religion to direct his thought and feeling into those channels where they will find expression in right action. I have said something, in an earlier chapter, about the relation of the Christian Church to education ; I only want to urge now that the world-wide desire for education may prove a valuable asset for Christianity.

A third asset is the modern consciousness of the value of the individual which finds its political expression in democracy. The right of the individual to self-determination is being challenged to-day in various ways. Bolshevism regards the individual as existing only for the purposes of the community ; Socialism persists in classifying humanity in groups —the " toilers," the " idle rich," the " capitalist class," etc. Social science is obliged, for its own purpose, to deal with the average man, of whom we can only say that he does not exist as a reality but only as a mathematical symbol ; and industrial organisation still aims at conformity to type rather than individual initiative. It might almost be said that in his claim to be himself a man has no helpers but his " unconquerable soul " and Christianity. To Jesus Christ every human being has a unique and separate value, and the recognition of this value is involved in the idea of the Fatherhood of God. Human institutions were made for man, not man for human institutions.

> Time's wheel runs back or stops ;
> Potter and clay endure.

As the heir to an immortal destiny every man is called to develop his own personality, not in selfish isolation, but through the discipline of life and the give and take of human fellowship. From the eternal standpoint, no man is an end in himself, for the only End is God; but from the standpoint of temporal life every man is an end in himself, and is wronged when he is treated as a means to an end outside himself. So Christianity stands for the supreme value of personality.

> How the world is made for each of us!
> How all we perceive and know in it
> Tends to some moment's product thus,
> When a soul declares itself—to wit,
> By its fruit, the thing it does!
>
> Be hate that fruit or love that fruit,
> It forwards the general deed of man,
> And each of the Many helps to recruit
> The life of the race by a general plan;
> Each living his own, to boot.[1]

It is only as an end in himself that a man can learn to recognise the reality of moral responsibility. He must not be allowed to hide himself from God among the trees of the garden of collective life. One of the great evils of modern life is that we think and act and vote in crowds so that the individual is in danger of being submerged in the group. The Christian remedy for this is not the

[1] Browning: *By the Fireside.*

isolation of the individual, which means deterioration and, ultimately, moral disaster, but the presentation of the Kingdom of God as an eternal order in which the evolution of personality reaches its appointed end in a realm of being where each separate self is a permanent centre of consciousness within the Whole whose ends he serves. "With one creative Spirit over all we may well believe in a unity of the many created spirits, such that the highest good of all will prove to be the highest good of each. And in the light of this Divine purpose we may well find the vocation and the meaning of our own individual life." [1]

"Our wills are ours, to make them Thine"—yet they are not truly ours till we have made them His by a personal act of self-surrender, and so we come back to the central paradox of Christianity—*Cui servire regnare est*—to serve Whom is to reign.

When I dream of the Christianity of to-morrow I see it welcoming all that science and art can bring to the elucidation of the mystery of life, recognising in all knowledge God's fuller revelation of Himself. I see it retranslating its technical phraseology into the language that men can understand, not afraid of losing the substance of truth when it clothes it in new forms. I see it teaching men to know their own worth as sons of God through Jesus Christ, and then calling on them to

[1] Ward: *The Realm of Ends*, p. 422.

" walk worthy of their vocation," responding with gratitude to the grace of God. I see it growing more tolerant of intellectual uncertainty, more intolerant of moral slackness. I see it leaving behind the vain dream of uniformity, and reaching out to the nobler ideal of unity in diversity. I see it exchanging the easy optimism of fancied security for the more bracing recognition of the stern conflict that lies before it, offering to men the sacrificial fellowship of the cross of Christ. I see it, not claiming to solve all the enigmas of life, but evoking and training the faith that can see enough to trust " the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." And sometimes I see dark forces of evil rallying for a conflict that will purify, as by fire, a Church that has become too much entangled with the world. And always I see the love of the God Who is Being and Thought and Will—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—brooding over the world of men, patiently achieving His purpose of good, gathering into His eternal kingdom the tired children who have learned " by the means of the evil that good is best," that they may rest a little while [1] ere they be gone, once more on their

[1] " Between one active life and another there may well be such an intermediate state of mental rumination, so to say, and reflection, as many theologians have assumed. This state, it has been said, ' is not a domain of deeds and works, for these are wanting. . . . It is a domain of inwardness, of silent consideration and pondering, a domain of recollection in the full sense of the word."—Ward: *The Realm of Ends*, p. 406.

adventure brave and new. What that adventure will be, we do not know. "Beloved, now are we children of God, and it is not yet made manifest what we shall be. We know that if it shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him even as He is." [1]

[1] 1 St. John iii. 2.

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